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**Corneille and the Spanish drama.**



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Columbia University  
*STUDIES IN ROMANCE PHILOLOGY AND  
LITERATURE*

CORNEILLE  
AND THE SPANISH DRAMA

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CORNEILLE

AND

THE SPANISH DRAMA

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To the Memory of  
MY FATHER



## NOTE

THE present work was completed but not ready for the press when a book by M. Martinenche, *La comedia espagnole en France au dix-septième siècle*, was published. Of this book, a portion deals with Corneille's relation to the Spanish drama. The two works, however, differ entirely, both in method of treatment and results. Despite the partial identity of subject, they have little, if anything, in common.



# CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. SPANISH INFLUENCES . . . . .	1
II. EARLY PLAYS . . . . .	6
III. CLITANDRE . . . . .	11
IV. L'ILLUSION . . . . .	20
V. LE CID . . . . .	30
1. Las Mocedades del Cid . . . . .	31
2. The Cid compared with the Mocedades del Cid . . . . .	54
3. Changes undergone by the Mocedades del Cid . . . . .	89
VI. LE MENTEUR . . . . .	94
1. The Menteur compared with the Ver- dad Sospechosa . . . . .	94
2. Changes undergone by the Verdad Sospechosa . . . . .	126
VII. LA SUITE DU MENTEUR . . . . .	131
VIII. HÉRACLIUS . . . . .	139
IX. DON SANCHE D'ARAGON . . . . .	145



## I. SPANISH INFLUENCES

EVER since the reign of Charles V., Spain had, for a considerable period, been the preponderating power in Europe. Her armies invaded the Old and the New World. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, the Two Sicilies, Sardinia, a considerable part of Northern Italy, Cerdagne and Rousillon, Franche-Comté, and the Netherlands, were all in the hands of the Spaniards. As the allies of the *Ligue*, they penetrated into the very heart of France, and in 1591 a Spanish garrison was established in Paris. The Catholics, constituting the vast bulk of the French people, sympathized with, and were assisted by Spain, the classical land of religious orthodoxy. Both during the religious struggles between Catholics and Huguenots, and later, during the Spanish wars, the French came into closer contact than before with their southern neighbors. Spanish politics and diplomacy, the Spanish army and

military tactics, were admired and emulated. Various monastic orders were introduced from Spain; Jesuitism itself, destined to become such a strong social force in France, was there born and nurtured.

It was during the first half of the seventeenth century that the influence of Spanish literature became established, developing alongside the Italian and classic influences. Spanish was learned by the cultured classes throughout Western Europe, and grew to be the means of intercourse between strangers. In France especially, Spanish was assiduously cultivated. It was the language of Louis XIII.'s wife, who kept a troupe of Spanish actors, and at whose court Spanish fashions were in great vogue.

Spanish literature had been flourishing ever since the middle of the sixteenth century and exerting considerable sway north of the Pyrenees. The Spanish drama and novel found hosts of readers and imitators in France, and both the chivalrous and pastoral romances were modelled after Spanish patterns. The romance of chivalry, which was the favorite reading of the Middle Ages, and which had long since disappeared from France, was reintroduced under



Francis I., an admirer of the ideals of knight-hood, by various writers, but especially by D'Herberay des Essarts, who translated several of those romances from Spanish, notably *Amadis des Gaules* (1540-48), which soon started a multitude of imitations. The reaction against the chivalrous romance likewise arose under Spanish influence, for Honoré d'Urfé's *Astrée* (1610-27) is fashioned after Jorge de Montemayor's *Diana enamorada*, itself, however, of Italian inspiration. The picaresque novel, too, found its way in France, and stimulated there the production of imitations.

Spanish influence, however, made itself most felt in the drama. Neither Jodelle, nor Garnier, nor Montchrétien, had succeeded in creating a public stage; their plays were represented in colleges and at the festivities of the great only, the first attempt toward the formation of a classical theatre thus proving a failure. With Hardy's activity (1599-1631 or 1632), however, began a new era for the French theatre. His plays brought new life and movement upon the stage, and the people were again attracted in large numbers. Hardy's manner, his extraordinary fertility—he wrote some seven hun-

dred plays — would point to a close connection with the Spanish drama. He appears, however, to have drawn more largely from the ancients and the Italians. The extent to which he is indebted to the Spanish would, moreover, be hard to estimate, owing to the relatively small number of his plays that have come down to us.

Besides Hardy's plays, the stage, before the appearance of the *Cid* (1636), presented the tragi-comedies and pastoral dramas of Racan, Mairet, and Gombauld; Théophile's tragedy, *Pyrame et Thisbé* (1672?); the first productions of Rotrou, du Ryer, and Scudéry; Mairet's *Sophonisbe*, a great success, and the first tragedy of the classical type; and finally the early plays of Corneille himself. Most of these poets imitated foreign authors, Italian to some extent, but mainly Spanish. The Spanish drama and novel furnished inexhaustible sources for materials, having come to be regarded as the common property of all. The novels of Cervantes, and Lope de Vega's dramas, above all, were the great storehouses whither French poets resorted for plots, intrigues, and incidents.

French literature was just then at the begin-

ning of a new epoch, while the Spanish had already attained to the summit of its development. Here was a sufficient reason for the French writers to turn to the Spaniards for aid and inspiration. Spain's political predominance, her traditional affiliations and close relations with France, the kinship of the languages, must, moreover, have materially facilitated an imitation of her literature. At a moment when the French drama, still in its infancy, was striving after perfection, it could not but look toward the Spanish drama, which had already realized its masterpieces. The playwrights of the epoch fell under that influence, nor did Corneille, the greatest of them all, escape it. It is Corneille's relation to the Spanish drama that will be traced in the following essay.

## II. EARLY PLAYS

CORNEILLE<sup>1</sup> is not one of those poets who achieved great fame at one bound. Before the appearance of his first great play, he had served an apprenticeship of about seven years. *Mélite*, his earliest play, is a comedy, and appeared in 1629, after which his pen rested for nearly three years. In 1632 he produced *Clitandre*, a tragi-comedy. From this year down to 1635 he wrote four comedies in rapid succession: *La Veuve* (1633), *La Galérie du Palais* (1634), *La Suivante* (1634), *La Place Royale* (1635). Also in 1635, together with Boisrobert, Colletet, Rotrou, and l'Estoile, Richelieu's *cinq auteurs*, he wrote the *Comédie des Tuileries*, after a plan furnished by the cardinal, who had a pronounced liking for the theatre, and desired, it appears, to add literary reputation to

<sup>1</sup> Born June 6, 1606, at Rouen; died September 30, 1684, in Paris.

his political fame. The third act of this comedy is generally attributed to Corneille. In 1635 he produced *Médée*, his first attempt at classical tragedy. Another comedy, *L'Illusion*, preceding the *Cid* but by a few months, was played in 1636.

By the year 1635, Corneille was one of the best-known dramatic poets of the time. His reputation was established, and acknowledged by those who rivalled with him for theatrical glory. Corneille had, however, not yet been able to see his way clear ; he had not yet discovered in what particular form of drama he might excel. For while advancing, in some respects, beyond the other poets of his time, he had, as yet, produced no play that raised him, in the estimation of his contemporaries, above the rank and file of the dramatic poets of the time. The plays above mentioned are no longer read ; nor are they produced on the stage to-day ; indeed, had not been so for years even during the classical period. Nothing in them predicted the powers which the poet was to display before long ; or, at least, very little, and this little has only, after laborious toil, been discovered by critics and biographers who,

prompted by a desire of establishing a greater unity in the poet's life, have endeavored to unearth, as it were, the great Corneille from these early attempts. Not only was his conception of life slowly developing during this period, as indeed it did during his period of perfection ; but even his language, the theory of his art, were but gradually emerging from his hands. He was groping about and feeling in all directions for what was most congenial to his talent. Perhaps Corneille had hoped to be the Plautus of his country. He not only wavered between comedy and tragedy ; he even searched yet for the mould in which to cast his materials.

Most of Corneille's productions of this formative period are comedies of intrigue, and little is found in them by way of reality and completeness of character. The plots are weak, and the situations have but little of the comical in them. We have, moreover, but a variation of the same theme in the different comedies : the same lovers crossed and thwarted by another lover, who resorts to false letters, kidnapping, and other similar strategies, in order to attain his aim. There are five or more lovers in every one of those comedies, and, as a rule, two

happy couples at the end. The characters are not sufficiently individualized, and genuine wit and humor are almost entirely lacking.

There is, nevertheless, a distinct advance in Corneille's early comedies above his precursors and contemporaries. In them almost everything pertaining to the farce is done away with. There is a marked tendency to cut loose from the conventional figures handed down by the old French farce and Italian *commedia dell' arte*, and thus to approach reality to a greater extent than had been done before. It is the part of society he knows from his own experience that Corneille tries to bring upon the stage; and while he does not succeed in creating lifelike characters, he is consciously striving to give a true picture of the things that had come under his direct notice. In his *Galérie du Palais* and *La Place Royale*, he puts the plots in definite and well-known places in Paris, thus imparting to these plays greater reality. In his preface to *La Veuve*, he says distinctly: "La comédie n'est qu'un portrait de nos actions et de nos discours, et la perfection des portraits consiste en la ressemblance. Sur cette maxime je tâche de ne

mettre en la bouche de mes acteurs que ce que diroient vraisemblablement en leur place ceux qu'ils représentent, et de les faire discourir en honnêtes gens, et non pas en auteurs." Corneille, thus attempting to depict the life of polite folks, must of course discard those manners which, although having disappeared from the life of refined society, had, as happens so frequently, continued to subsist, owing to theatrical tradition and routine, on the boards of the stage. There is less conventionality and more decency in Corneille's early comedies than in the old French comedy.



### III. CLITANDRE

CORNEILLE'S second play, *Clitandre*, a tragi-comedy, produced in 1632, throws not a little light upon his early development. He here first shows a knowledge of the dramatic unities ; here too, as later in the *Cid*, it is to a purely romantic subject that he attempts, at least in one respect, to apply the classical canons.

*Clitandre* is a veritable romance, strongly resembling the chivalrous romances still so much in vogue at the time. Noble knights and ladies, the joys and woes of their loves, their jealousies and bravery, are all brought before our eyes. The following is a brief abstract of the play.

Pymante, the villain, loves Dorise. She, however, has bestowed her affections upon Rosidore. Pymante, therefore, resolves to kill his rival. A challenge purporting to come from Clitandre, but really drawn up by two of his servants bribed by Pymante, lures Rosidore

into the woods adjoining the king's castle. Meanwhile, Rosidore is smitten with the charms of Caliste, whom Dorise, who is infatuated with Rosidore, under the pretext of proving to her that he is untrue, succeeds in enticing to the same woods. Both Pymante and Dorise are planning to rid themselves of their rivals by killing them. Rosidore and Caliste walk right into the snare laid for them; and, as it happens, the four turn up in the forest on the same spot, and at the same moment. Dorise is just about to cut off Caliste's head with a great sword, when Rosidore, wounded, rushes in pursued by Pymante and Clitandre's two servants, the three disguised as peasants. The valiant Rosidore slays one of the servants, but, on the point of doing away with another of his assailants, breaks his sword against a tree. At this critical moment, he catches sight of a sword swung in the air; it is the one Dorise is just brandishing over the head of fair Caliste. Never was sword more welcome; he snatches it from Dorise's villanous hand, saves his lady's life, runs the other servant through, and puts Pymante to flight. Dorise likewise flees.

Meanwhile, Caliste faints away, and Rosidore, thinking her dead, decides to commit suicide upon her body; he is, at considerable length, soliloquizing as to the advisability of his resolution, when Caliste comes to herself; taking him for Pymante, and believing he has killed Rosidore, she entreats him to take her life. But she soon recognizes him, and each discovering that the other is alive, they make for a village near by, where Rosidore may have his wounds dressed, and Caliste recover from her fright. All that, and more, is seen on the stage in the first act alone.

Dorise, in her flight through the woods, finds the garments cast away by one of Clitandre's servants, and puts them on, for fear of being discovered. She meets Pymante, who recognizes her in spite of her disguise in man's clothing. His protestations of love becoming a trifle too aggressive, she resorts in self-defence, no longer having her sword with her, to a hair-pin, and successfully puts out one of his eyes. Again she flees, her one-eyed lover after her. He is about to destroy her, when Floridan, "*le fils du roi*," appearing suddenly on the scene, engages him in combat, and, assisted by Dorise, manages

to overcome him. Meanwhile, Clitandre is taken for the would-be assassin of Rosidore; he is thrown into jail and sentenced to death by the "roi." But Pymante's guilt is discovered in time. Rosidore marries Caliste, while Clitandre, by way of compensation for the injury inflicted upon him, receives Dorise for his wife at the just king's hands.

*Clitandre* is a dramatized romance, bombastic and inflated in language. It bristles with exaggerations and improbabilities, and is full of the most intricate occurrences, all being crowded into the space of twenty-four hours. According to the theory then obtaining, comedy pictured reality, while the ideal creations of poetry belonged to the province of tragedy. In *Mélite* (1629) Corneille had attempted to portray the manners of actual life; but when the poet sought to give artistic expression to the ideal, before he was ripe enough to draw from history blended with his own life-experience, he utilized in his first attempt at tragedy the conventional figures and stereotyped adventures of the chivalrous romance. Taste, restraint, reality, are as yet wholly wanting. Romantic as it is, *Clitandre* affords an illustration of Corneille's conception

of art toward 1632, showing how very remote he was, but four years before the production of the *Cid*, from the classic ideal.

It would hardly be worth while to give the contents of Corneille's early plays; and if this has been done for *Clitandre*, it is by no means because it is superior to the others. It is, on the contrary, both in conception and execution, inferior to most of his other early plays. No one has criticised *Clitandre* more severely than Corneille himself. In his *Préface* he says: "Il faut néanmoins que j'avoue que ceux qui n'ayant vu représenter *Clitandre* qu'une fois, ne le comprendront pas nettement, seront fort excusables." And many years later, in 1660, when Corneille wrote his *Examens* to his plays, feeling somewhat ashamed of that juvenile production, he asserts that *Clitandre* was but a jest intended to prove by a *reductio ad absurdum* the superiority of *Mélite*—this play having been criticised for the simplicity of its plot and style, and furthermore for the non-observance of the unity of time:—

"J'entendis que ceux du métier la blâmoient de peu d'effets, et de ce que le style en étoit trop familier. Pour la justifier contre cette

censure par une espèce de bravade et montrer que ce genre de pièces avoit les vraies beautés de théâtre, j'entrepis d'en faire une régulière (c'est-à-dire dans les vingt et quatre heures), pleine d'incidents, et d'un style plus élevé, mais qui ne vaudroit rien du tout: en quoi je réussis parfaitement."

Far from seeing in *Clitandre* a literary ruse, one may look upon it as an interesting illustration of the poet's conception of his art at the time. For it is plain that what displeased Corneille in *Clitandre*, in his later years, was its exaggeration and untruth.

If Corneille's first attempt at anything like tragic effect is altogether romantic in spirit, the requirements of reason, of classicism, if preferable, are already becoming manifest. When writing *Mélite*, he did not know, as he himself declares, anything about the classical precepts; only after having finished it, he learned of the existence of the unity of time. But his *Préface* to *Clitandre* is almost entirely given up to a consideration of the classical canons; indeed almost every preface he writes henceforth deals with the rules laid down for the theatre. The unities from now on form his constant preoccu-

pation. In that preface, he exhibits, nevertheless, a remarkable spirit, asserting his right to follow those precepts only when he thinks fit, and to disregard them if he chooses. He wishes by all means to preserve his independence. "Que si j'ai renfermé cette pièce dans la règle d'un jour, ce n'est pas que je me repente de n'y avoir point mis *Mélite*, ou que je me sois résolu à m'y attacher dorénavant." The observance of the unity of time constitutes, however, the sole classical feature of *Clitandre*. There is no unity of place ; the events occur now in the "château du roi," now in the woods, and now in a jail. The scene is laid nowhere ; by changing in later editions the "roi" into a "roi d'Écosse," Corneille did not materially add to the definiteness of the place. All the incidents appear on the stage, instead of being narrated by messengers, although Corneille is well aware that this is not in conformance with the rules : "Quiconque voudra bien peser l'avantage que l'action a sur ces longs et ennuyeux récits, ne trouvera pas étrange que j'aye mieux aimé divertir les yeux qu'importuner les oreilles . . . et que me tenant dans la contrainte de cette méthode, j'en aye pris la beauté, sans tomber

dans les incommodités que les Grecs et les Latins, qui l'ont suivie, n'ont su d'ordinaire ou du moins n'ont osé éviter." What admirable independence of judgment is here shown by Corneille, and what a pity he did not adhere to that idea in his later development.

Thus *Clitandre* may be said to disclose Corneille's early attitude toward dawning classicism ; how he makes his first concession to it ; and how on the whole he maintains his independence thereof. It reveals, furthermore, his frame of mind, his love for spirited action, his sympathy for the romantic. *Clitandre* possesses all the movement, the freedom from restraint, and the exaggerations of the Spanish drama ; as soon as Corneille becomes acquainted with it, it will necessarily attract and inspire him. By that time, however, he will already, to some extent, have undergone the influence of classicism.

The first play Corneille wrote under this classical influence was *Médée*, a tragedy, in 1635. It is a very close imitation of Seneca with, here and there, some parts from Euripides, and some additions of his own. Although classical in subject and form, it too is pervaded



by the romantic spirit of the epoch. The gallantry, for instance, of Ægée and Créuse, the tendency toward the mystic in making Médée exercise her witchcraft on every occasion, are romantic traits. Events are heaped up too much, and some, by their very nature excluded from the classical drama, are exhibited upon the stage. Above all, the language used throughout lacks all classical qualities. In his *Examen*, the author himself declares : “Quant au style, il est fort inégal en ce poëme ; et ce que j’y ai mêlé du mien approche si peu de ce que j’ai traduit de Sénèque, qu’il n’est point besoin d’en mettre le texte en marge pour faire discerner au lecteur ce qui est de lui ou de moi.”

#### IV. L'ILLUSION

AFTER *Médée*, Corneille returned to comedy: the *Illusion* appeared but a few months before the *Cid*. Following are, in brief, the contents of this play: —

Clindor, a young nobleman, unable to endure his father's harsh treatment, forsakes his parental home for parts unknown — not neglecting, however, to take along a portion of its treasure, and sets out upon a career of adventures and hardships. After some years, however, the old Pridamant, regretting his severity, starts out in quest of the prodigal son. He searches the length and breadth of the land, but to no avail; as a last resource, he applies to the wisdom of Alcandre, a famous magician. The first act, the prologue to the play according to the author, presents Alcandre, near a grotto, his abode, engaged in consultation with Pridamant and a friend of the latter. The next three acts form a comedy by themselves, by

far the more interesting part of the play, showing Clindor's whereabouts and doings, his love troubles, his dangers, his imprisonment, and his condemnation to death, and finally his happy escape from prison, and his elopement with his sweetheart Isabelle. All these vicissitudes, the all-powerful magician, by his charms, conjures up before the eyes of both Pridamant and the audience. Lastly, in the fifth act, Alcandre shows the distressed father what became of Clindor and Isabelle after their flight. They have turned actors, of which, however, Alcandre fails to acquaint Pridamant, and are just seen representing the principal parts in the last act of a most pathetic romantic tragedy: Clindor is killed, and Isabelle nearly dies from her grief. When the curtain drops, concealing the awful catastrophe from the eyes of the grief-stricken father, he believes the events he has been witnessing have actually occurred, as did, indeed, those which, but a short while before, were evoked by the astute magician's wand. He is in despair, when the curtain—the one on the stage upon the stage—rolls up again, and both the reassured father and the delighted au-

dience perceive Clindor, safe and sound, seated with the rest of the troupe around a table, and counting the receipts of the show for the evening, each pocketing the share earned by his histrionic efforts.

There are thus, as it were, three plays, three actions, which envelop one another. The whole is a fantastic romantic comedy, wherein witchcraft plays a very conspicuous part, this being about the only resemblance the *Illusion* bears to *Médée*, the preceding piece, from which it differs as much as *Médée* does from the classical tragedy. In the *Illusion*, then, it is seen, Corneille once more shows his predilection for the romantic. In it, moreover, we shall discover the first evidences of his acquaintance with Spanish literature.

The second, third, and fourth acts set forth, as was indicated, Clindor's life. After numberless vicissitudes, he enters, at Bordeaux, the service of Matamore, a Gascon captain. He first acts as intermediary between his master and Isabelle; but soon succeeds in winning her love for himself. Isabelle, meanwhile, is pledged by her father to Adraste, a young nobleman. On the other hand, Lyse, Isabelle's

maid, in love with, and hence jealous of, Clindor, betrays him to Adraste. Clindor, attacked by his rival, kills him, is thrown into jail, and sentenced to death. Lyse, however, repentant of the mischief she had wrought her mistress, induces the jailer, by a promise to marry him, to let Clindor escape. Isabelle visits her lover in his prison, and both prisoner and jailer, each accompanied by his sweetheart, start out upon a merry journey.

This comedy — for such it is in spite of the tragic incident of Adraste's death — inserted in the middle of the play, is well conceived, simple in plot, and skilfully conducted. The language is remarkably plain and concise, and relatively free from the affectations that mar so much of Corneille's best work. Here and there, agreeable humor, grace of speech, and quickness of repartee truly comical, enliven the dialogue. On the whole, the characters of Isabelle and Lyse are well drawn in their happy mixture of wit, irony, and artfulness, with sincere and heart-felt sentiment. Isabelle, to be sure, is less artful than her maid; she loves Clindor and does not hesitate to confess to him her affection; while Lyse, in her

pleasing pertness, her vivacity and energy, already announces the endless array of those soubrettes of the comedy, who far from being introduced into the plots, as are, indeed, the *suivantes* of the tragedy, by the sheer necessities created by too rigid an application of the classical canons, were to play such an important part in the comedies of Corneille's successors.

The figure of Matamore, the braggart captain, is generally considered as establishing a connection between Corneille and Spanish literature. However, this character, although it originally represented a caricature of the Spanish officer, is one of the conventional stock figures of the Italian *commedia dell' arte*, as inevitable in this theatre as the eternally-duped Pantaloon, the pedantic Latin-jabbering Doctor, and the *zanni* of all kinds. Various Italian troupes had visited Paris ever since 1584, and each had its actor impersonating that formidable swaggerer; in Corneille's own time, Nicolo Barbieri's company played there, — from 1625 to 1642; among its members we meet the captain Bellorofonte Martellone. Corneille might well have seen this *capitano* during his repeated visits from Rouen to Paris since 1629.

The cowardly, blustering soldier seems to be a native growth of the French theatre: he is found in the early French farce. Later, in the second half of the sixteenth century, this rodomontading swashbuckler loses somewhat in his national appearance, and under the modifying influence of the Italian comedy he becomes the *captain*, sometimes a Frenchman, but with predilection a foreigner from the South, an Italian, or a Spaniard—in the *Illusion* he is a Gascon. He appears, among others, in Baïf (*Le Brave*, 1567); Grévin (*Les Esbahis*); Odet de Turnèbe (*Les Contents*, 1584); Larivey (*Les Trompeurs*); Godard (*Les Déguisés*, 1594); François d'Amboise (*Les Napolitaines*). Shortly before the *Illusion*, we meet the captain in Montluc's *Comédie des Proverbes* (1633); in *Agésilan de Colchos* (1635) by Rotrou, Corneille's friend. In 1636, the year of the *Illusion*, is produced *Le Railleur ou la satire du temps*. In the preface, the author, Maréchal, claims that his is the first French play in verse in which the captain appears: "Je dirai pourtant en sa faveur que c'est le premier capitain en vers qui a paru dans la scène française, qu'il n'a point eu d'exemple et de modèle

devant lui, et qu'il a précédé, au moins du temps, deux autres qui l'ont surpassé en tout le reste, et qui sont sortis de deux plumes si fameuses et comiques dans l'*Illusion* et les *Visionnaires*."

The captain, therefore, was a familiar type, both upon the French and the Italian stage in Paris by the time the *Illusion* was produced, and despite his name, there is nothing in Matamore that points to any direct connection with Spanish literature. The captain continued upon the stage after the production of the *Illusion*. He appears in *Les Visionnaires* (1637) by Desmarest; in Rotrou's *Clarice ou L'Amour constant* (1641); in Scarron's *Les Boutades du Capitan Matamore* (1646), and in his *Mariage de Matamore*; in Cyrano de Bergerac's *Pédant Joué* (1654); and in La Fontaine's *Eunuque* (1654).

In the eighteenth century, the captain turns up again in Lesage's *Point d'honneur* (1725), adapted from *No hay amigo para amigo* by Francisco de Rojas. Modernized forms are met with in Augier's *Aventurière* (1848), and in Daudet's immortal *Tartarin*. In Gautier's *Capitaine Fracasse*, the real captain looms up



again : in the Château de Bruyère, a troupe of strolling comedians play the *Rodomontades du Capitaine Matamore*, a most brilliant resuscitation of the old farcical figure.

For the first unmistakable influence of Spanish literature upon Corneille, it is not to Matamore we must look, but to the brave and more sympathetic, if not less adventurous, Clindor. This figure seems to have been suggested to Corneille by the heroes of the *novela picaresca*, which began to flourish in Spain toward the middle of the sixteenth century. Clindor is nothing else but a *picaro*. His somewhat checkered career is best told in the words of the magician Alcandre to Pridamant, Clindor's father : —

“ Il vous prit quelque argent, mais ce petit butin  
A peiue lui dura du soir jusqu'au matin ;  
Et pour gagner Paris, il vendit par la plaine  
Des brevets à chasser la fièvre et la migraine,  
Dit la bonne aventure, et s'y rendit ainsi.  
Là, comme on vit d'esprit, il en vécut aussi.  
Dedans Saint-Innocent il se fit secrétaire ;  
Après, montant d'état, il fut clerc d'un notaire.  
Ennuyé de la plume, il la quitta soudain,  
Et fit danser un singe au faubourg Saint-Germain.  
Il se mit sur la rime, et l'essai de sa veine  
Enrichit les chanteurs de la Samaritaine.

Son style prit après de plus beaux ornements ;  
Il se hasarda même a faire des romans,  
Des chansons pour Gautier, des pointes pour Guillaume.  
Depuis, il trafiqua de chapelets de baume,  
Vendit du mithridate en maître opérateur,  
Revint dans le Palais, et fut solliciteur.  
Enfin jamais Buscon, Lazarille de Tormes,  
Sayavèdre, et Gusman, ne prirent tant de formes."

*Lazarillo de Tormes* by Hurtado de Mendoza, appeared in 1553 ; it was the first of the long series of the picaresque novels. It was translated into French in 1560, and then in 1620. Guzman and Sayavedra are characters of *Guzman de Alfarache* by Mateo Aleman, published in 1599, and done into French twice, in 1600, and in 1632. It was again translated, much later, by Lesage. Buscon, finally, is the chief personage of Quevedo y Villega's famous *Historia de la vida del buscon llamado Don Pablos* ; it came out in 1626, and was turned into French in 1633.

It thus appears that Corneille was acquainted with the picaresque novel ; and his citation of its most noted heroes in connection with Clin-dor, renders it not improbable that they may even have suggested this character.

We find then, in Corneille, before the *Cid*,

a romantic spirit, which was largely due to the influence of Spanish life and literature. This romanticism is conspicuous even in the classical *Médée*; in *Clitandre*, and partly in the *Illusion*, Corneille reintroduces the fantastic world of chivalry. In the play that immediately preceded the *Cid*, we meet a character drawn after a Spanish model, the adventurous *picaro*. Classical purity and directness of language are as yet nowhere reached. The unities, Corneille applies in a sort of half-hearted way; he has not yet attained to a clear conception of his art. But the mock-heroic Matamore and the shiftless *picaro* do not long retard Corneille in his onward course. He soon abandons these burlesque characters for the ideal hero. It is in Spanish literature that he seeks inspiration, and he at last encounters it in the national hero of Spain, the much-sung Cid. The romantic hero of mediæval Spain then becomes the hero of the classical French tragedy, finally established by Corneille.

## V. LE CID

THE *Cid*, represented for the first time in December, 1636, or January, 1637, was a great success, a veritable triumph, for Corneille. All Paris, the court and the people, noblemen and bourgeois, were carried away by it. Very strange, indeed, would it have been, had such a tremendous success not aroused the jealousy and envy of his rivals. Their wrath was unchained. The very men who, not so very long before, had sounded his praises, and greeted him, at his début, as a great poet, now turned against him in a body, and the *Cid* was declared by savants and poets alike to be inferior by far to the author's preceding plays, the mere titles of which are scarcely remembered to-day. The taste of the public was of no account, it was claimed, and its verdict had to yield to that of men who knew Aristotle, and who could discourse about the rules laid down by him in his *Poetics*. The names of all the

great poets of antiquity were hurled at the author's head. There broke out one of the liveliest pen-and-ink wars known in literary history, waged both in prose and in verse, and occupying some three years. Rotrou alone stood by Corneille in this strife against critics like Chapelain and the Abbé d'Aubignac, and against such poets as Mairet, Scudéry, Claveret, and many others, who in this way mainly transmitted their names to posterity. Even Richelieu himself was mixed up in the affair. Relations between them had been rather strained since Corneille refused to remain one of his *five authors*; the introduction upon the French stage of the national hero of Spain could not quite suit Richelieu's anti-Spanish politics; and the justification of the duel and of private vengeance, the spirited pride and insubordination manifested by the count, might well have been thought to militate against the stringent measures directed by the cardinal against the turbulent aristocracy.

### 1. LAS MOCEDADES DEL CID

It is said that M. de Chalon, an officer of the court of Anne d'Autriche, where Spanish was

spoken and Spanish literature cultivated, having retired to Rouen, and there met Corneille, recommended to him the study of Guillem de Castro. Whether this report be authentic or not, the fact is that Corneille's acquaintance with Guillem de Castro's *Las Mocedades del Cid* proved to be the turning-point in his life, and a most important event in the history of the classical tragedy. Let us examine the relations between the French and the Spanish *Cid*; the growth and development of Corneille's first masterpiece; the process which the subject of the *Cid* underwent, and the ultimate changes it suffered in passing from the romantic drama of Spain to the classical tragedy of the French.

Guillem de Castro, a contemporary of Lope de Vega, and one of the most noted dramatic poets of the age, was born at Valencia in 1569. His life was an adventurous one; he was a captain in the Spanish army; served in Italy; and died in poverty at Madrid in 1631 — about five years before the production of Corneille's *Cid*. He was held in great esteem by Lope de Vega, who dedicated to him some of his dramas.

*Las Mocedades del Cid* is an historical drama. The subject is taken from the heroic epoch of mediæval Spain, when the Christian Spaniards carried on their wars of deliverance from Moorish rule. The Cid, the hero of the play, was long the idol of the Spanish people, the embodiment of the Christian knight. The events happen toward the end of the eleventh century; they take up nearly a year; the scene is laid in various places, now at Burgos, the capital of Fernando, king of Castile, now in Galicia, now again in the mountains. A series of splendid tableaux is unrolled, showing Rodrigo's prowess and sense of honor and duty, his love of Jimena, his exploits against the enemies of his country, his loyalty to the king, and his piety; in short, the ideal of the Middle Ages. The frame to these pictures is furnished by the mediæval manners; and the background is formed by the national conflicts with the Moors, and the hostilities between rival Spanish states. The *comedia famosa* is divided into two parts, with the first of which only, complete in itself, we are here concerned, it being the one to which Corneille is indebted for his *Cid*. Each part consists of three acts.

*A. First Act*

A splendid hall at Burgos. The king, in presence of his court, before the altar of Santiago, Spain's patron, dubs the young Rodrigo a knight. The very first scene of the play thus brings before our eyes the most important act of chivalrous life. At the same time the principal motives of the drama are, right at the beginning, adroitly and distinctly indicated: the valor of young Rodrigo; Jimena's passion, and also that of Doña Urraca; Count Lozano's pride; and the violent temper of Don Sancho. Doña Urraca, the infanta, fastens the spurs to Rodrigo's boots, and the queen presents him with a horse. During that solemn ceremony, the love for the handsome young knight is seen budding, as it were, in the hearts of both Doña Urraca and Jimena. While the ladies, accompanied by Don Sancho, go out to see him mount his steed, the king informs the grandees of his realm that he has selected a governor for the prince. He confers that great honor upon the old Don Diego Laínez. Count Lozano, however, a presumptuous, arrogant vassal, believing that he deserves the distinction himself, ques-



tions Don Diego's capacity to fill that high office. A violent quarrel ensues between him and Don Diego. The king's efforts to interfere prove useless; the passions of the two noblemen take their course in spite of the respect due to the monarch, and finally the count slaps Don Diego's face. The outraged old man, weak and staggered, is powerless. The count, indeed, asks the king's pardon, but confident of obtaining support from his numerous retainers, boldly defies him. — The drama has been set into motion with considerable effect.

Don Diego, weighed down by his disgrace, arrives at his home, wild and furious; he meets his three sons who, having just returned from court, suspend their weapons on the wall. "Now you hang up your swords?" he asks, maddened with anger; surprised and frightened, they do not understand him. Without offering any explanation, he orders them to leave. Remaining alone, he tests his arm by trying to handle his faithful old sword; but his strength fails, and he despairs. Then follows a scene in which Don Diego, as in the old ballads, calling his sons in one after the other, tries their strength and courage. He

first presses the hands of his two younger sons in his; they cry out with pain, whereupon he indignantly dismisses them, as being too weak and cowardly to avenge his disgrace. He then calls in Rodrigo, who is angry, because, although the oldest, he was not appealed to first. Don Diego bites his son's finger; Rodrigo, infuriated, declares he would slap his face, were it not that he was his father. Don Diego embraces him, tells him his shame, and asks him to wash off the stain from his honor with the blood of the count, who, he says, is one of the bravest men of the realm. Rodrigo, left alone, gives vent to his grief. He loves Jimena so ardently, how could he kill her father? But his father has lost his honor, the family's fair name has been dishonored. There is but one remedy, the count's death. His father is insulted, and it matters little who the offender is.—His hesitation does not last long, and the conception of chivalrous honor quickly prevails over his love for the count's daughter.

The scene changes to a square before the king's palace. On a balcony, Doña Urraca and Jimena, still under the impression of the

knighting scene, speak admiringly of Rodrigo. Enter the count, accompanied by his kinsman Peranzúles, who, acting upon orders from the king, tries to induce him to apologize to Diego. Lozano flatly refuses. He does not fear anybody, he declares: sooner should Castile be undone than he. Satisfaction by words would only disgrace him, without doing the least good to Don Diego, whose honor it would patch up with a piece taken from his own. The sword alone can decide. Thus arguing, they pass the two girls, and disappear at the other end of the square. Doña Urraca and Jimena have observed them from the balcony without, however, being able to overhear their conversation; but Jimena's apprehensions are aroused by the violent gesticulations and the furious countenance of her father. Her fears are yet heightened when Rodrigo, visibly excited, appears before the palace, in quest of the count. Lozano and Peranzúles return. At the same moment Don Diego issues from the door of his house, with his relative Arias Gonzalo. Jimena's presence causes Rodrigo to waver in his resolution to kill her father, but Don Diego's exhortations impel him to instant

action. In his desire to prevent a clash, if possible, Peranzúles is anxious to avoid Rodrigo. But the count, declaring that it is not his wont to swerve from his way, walks straight on, when Rodrigo boldly stops him. After a short quarrel, the count insults him, and pressed close by the impetuous attack of the youth, draws his sword. Jimena is with great difficulty prevented by Doña Urraca from precipitating herself from the balcony, while the old Diego continues to urge his son to avenge his disgrace. The two men leave fighting. An instant later a cry is heard. Jimena, followed by Doña Urraca, rushes out wildly, only to find her father dead. Don Diego rejoices over the victory of his son. Peranzúles sets the count's men on Rodrigo, who returns upon the stage fighting with them. But Doña Urraca interferes and saves his life. Her cry of admiration, "Oh valiente castellano!" aptly expresses the fundamental note of the thrilling events of the first act.

In this highly dramatic act, full of stirring action and rapid movements, the scenes follow in logical and necessary connection, with no foreign episodes intervening ; and the interest

is gradually rising, and sustained to the end. The heroic Rodrigo is the central figure. He is made a knight, honored by the king and the queen, distinguished by the princess and Jimena; the feeling of honor, and of duty toward his father, prevails over his love for the woman he worships; and, lastly, he achieves his first valourous deed in defeating in single combat the bravest soldier of Castile, on the very day he was knighted. There we have the true *chevalier*: he has won the hearts of the noblest and fairest ladies, vanquished the most valiant man of the kingdom, and, what is more, succeeded in conquering his own self.

### *B. Second Act*

Arias Gonzalo and Peranzúles rush into the kingly palace, bringing the fatal news of the count's death. After them come in on one side Jimena, her handkerchief soaked in the blood of her father; and on the other, Don Diego, the cheek that had been slapped besmeared with his enemy's blood. She demands Rodrigo's death. The old man comes to surrender himself; he claims that being the one who incited his son to

the deed, he ought to suffer the penalty for it. Through this rudeness of manners, this ferocious display of blood, there appears a trait of gallantry in the old Diego: "I do not wish to grieve you, Jimena; you are a woman, you may speak first." The king promises justice to Jimena, and orders that Don Diego be imprisoned; upon the entreaty of the prince Don Sancho, however, he is intrusted to his care.

Upon her return home, the desolate Jimena finds in her house Rodrigo, who, instead of going to his father, whom he did not see since the fight, comes to deliver himself up to the vengeance of the woman he adores, offering her his dagger to kill him. She, however, declares she will pursue him as the murderer of her father, but will not take his life with her own hand. She avows he acted like a true knight in avenging his outraged father, but says that it behooves her as a faithful daughter to see that the murderer should be punished. Meanwhile, Don Diego, fearing for his son's life, which is threatened by the dead count's friends and kinsmen, anxiously awaits him in a solitary place at the outskirts of the city, where Rodrigo promised to join him. It is a dark night. Don Diego is

growing more and more restless, but his misgivings soon yield to triumphant joy. He at last presses his beloved son to his longing breast. To conciliate the king, he gives Rodrigo the command over five hundred of his friends, sending him forth against the Moors, who were making an inroad upon Castile ; he hopes that by defeating the enemy, Rodrigo will win his master's pardon. With these knights, the benediction of his father, and his good sword, the youth now starts out on a long series of heroic adventures.

Meanwhile, Doña Urraca, with the queen, her mother, have also left the court. Seated at a window, in the tower of one of the royal castles, she is plunged in sweet reveries, her gaze wandering over the beautiful scenery before her, vividly portrayed in her simple and naïve words. The deep quiet reigning all around her, interrupted only by the chirping of the birds and the babbling of the brooks, suggests to her, by contrast, the din and turmoil of the court, where, she says, some wreak revenge, while others are clamoring for justice. She has grown tired of court life, she declares. Suddenly, Rodrigo's image emerges from the depths of

her soul. What has become of the young knight for whom she buckled the spurs, she wonders? Is he safe or in danger? She does not know what ails her—the thoughts of him fill her with profound melancholy. All at once she beholds a troop of knights riding by. She calls to them—to the captain with the yellow plume. He comes nearer, she says, he thrusts his lance into a tree, dismounts and bows to her. What does she see? “How lucky!” The captain with the yellow plume is Rodrigo, who—by sheer chance—meets Doña Urraca, on his way to fight the Moors. Never, perhaps, was knight more gallant than Rodrigo on this occasion. He receives her good wishes, and thus equipped, sallies forth “para vencer moros.”

The following scene shows a battle between the Spaniards and the Moors in the Oca Mountains. War-cries are heard before the combatants appear upon the stage. A cowardly, good-natured, and humorous shepherd, the *gracioso* of the play, rushes in, fleeing before the enemy in great terror. Shaking with fear, he climbs to the top of a hill, and there hides behind a rock. From that safe place he bravely defies



the Moors, who are now following close upon his heels. The trumpets of the Christians, however, and the cries of "Santiago!" and "Cierra España!" call them away. Our good shepherd cautiously ventures out from his hiding-place, and with manifest glee watches the exciting spectacle of the battle, of which, perched upon his elevated post, he gives in droll and terse vernacular a most glowing description, punctuating the fall of each Moor with a cry of exuberant joy. He valiantly encourages the Spaniards and bestows his praise lavishly upon them. Above all, a horseman with a yellow plume upon his helmet elicits his most jubilant admiration. It is Rodrigo, who now appears fighting single-handed a band of Moors. He captures their king, and then leaves hastily: for he has, as he informs us, four more Moorish kings to vanquish yet on that same day. "By God, how I've enjoyed that sight! This is the way, from on high, you must see those things!" joyfully exclaims the good shepherd, hastening after Rodrigo and his prisoners.

Again we are in the court at Burgos. The prince, Don Sancho, is taking a lesson from his fencing-master in the presence of Don Diego.

He grows angry at his teacher, and attacks him furiously ; and it is only Don Diego's interference that saves the latter's life. Don Sancho refuses to continue his fencing practice ; he pretends to know more than his master. It is, he declares, not of the sword that he is afraid ; for it was predicted to him that he would die by a javelin thrown by a near relative of his. At this point enters Doña Urraca, his sister ; a page carries before her a hunting-spear covered with the gore of a wild boar, which she has just killed.\* The daring and adroitness of his sister excite still more the superstitious and impetuous prince, and he insults her. This episode, like many others interspersed throughout the play, is intended for the development of the characters, and also for the preparation of events which are to occur in the second part of the dramatic poem. We then see Don Fernando receiving the captured Moorish king whom Rodrigo despatched to Burgos to announce his victory and his arrival. Upon his return from his triumphant expedition, Rodrigo is most cordially welcomed by the king, who, by this time, seeing in him only the meritorious and valuable captain, has forgotten all about the

count's death, and his solemn pledge to Jimena to punish the murderer of her father. It is upon that occasion that, the captive king addressing Rodrigo as "el mio Cid" (my lord, in Arabic), Don Fernando confers upon the valiant knight that appellation as a title of honor.

At this juncture — some three months after her father's death — appears Jimena, in mourning, now for the second time demanding justice; a very unfavorable moment, indeed, to obtain redress against the Cid, who has now become indispensable to the king. Don Fernando embraces him in her very presence; the only punishment he inflicts upon him is to banish him from court by sending him forth against the enemy to obtain fresh victories. This closes the second act.

In the first act, the events occur in and about the court at Burgos; moreover, they follow, flowing from one another, in quick succession, and turn around one chief point: Rodrigo's revenge — the triumph of his duty over his love. The second act, however, is less coherent. The place changes more frequently: with Rodrigo we are transported now to the royal castle, now to the field of battle, and then back

again to Burgos. When he returns, three months have elapsed, to mark which several scenes are inserted : we assist at the quarrel between Don Sancho and his fencing-master, and between Don Sancho and his sister ; and likewise at the meeting between Don Fernando and the Moorish king. These scenes, as well as the great episode of the battle with the Moors, complete the characters and the entire picture as well. \*A great fragment of life and nature is thus brought before us : we see not only palaces, the court life with its knights and ladies, but also pleasant country scenes, wild mountains, the clash of armies ; and besides the brave, high-minded knight, the grotesque poltroon shepherd. But while all these incidents are important enough in their way, we have wandered from the main action : Jimena, with her woes and her love, and even Rodrigo himself are well-nigh forgotten. Thus the interest is scattered, and consequently the dramatic effect lessened ; there is, to be sure, a gain in variety for the eye, in picturesque-ness, in breadth of scope ; but the attention of the onlooker is correspondingly diminished ; and the conflict of forces, the psychological

and moral problem, in a word, is gradually lost sight of.

### *C. Third Act*

Doña Urraca confides to Arias Gonzalo her apprehensions for her future ; her father is old, and her brother her relentless enemy ; she loves Rodrigo, but he is in love with Jimena, who returns his affection. The king, entering, allays her fears, and then announces to his council that he will charge Rodrigo with the conquest of Calahorra, a region disputed by the Aragonese, his neighbors. For the third time now, the courageous and persistent Jimena appears demanding Rodrigo's punishment. The king, Gonzalo having whispered into his ear that she loves Rodrigo, here resorts to a ruse, in order to test the strength of her affection ; he has a servant bring in the false report of Rodrigo's death. Jimena falls into a swoon. When told the truth, she declares that it was from sheer joy at the glad news of her enemy's death that she has fainted. She then at once recommences to press her prosecution, and prevails upon the king to publish, in conformance with an old usage, a decree promising her per-

son and the whole of her fortune to him who will bring her Rodrigo's head. The old Diego and the others are loud in their admiration for Jimena's filial love, and her deep sense of honor.

Once more we leave the court. The Cid would not be the perfect knight, the embodiment of the cardinal virtues of the national character, the ideal of the people — were he not a pious Christian. The Cid, triumphant over his passion, avenging his father and rehabilitating the outraged honor of the family; valorous in single combat; true and constant in his love and gallant toward ladies; victorious over the enemy and loyal to his king — all that has been sufficiently portrayed. Now we shall see him pious and devout, full of brotherly love for the poor, the lowly, the wretched. — Accompanied by two soldiers and our shepherd, the Cid, on his way to Calahorra, arrives at daybreak at a solitary field, in advance of his army. They take a short rest. The soldiers and the shepherd wish to eat. First let us pray, says the Cid. It is better to pray after eating, the shepherd rejoins. He cannot understand how the Cid, a knight, can be so pious. Evidently, to his

mind, the soldier and the pious cannot be united in one and the same man ; his experience has ever shown them to be separated and distinct, with virtues and vices of their own, peculiar to their occupation in life. Soldiers are fighting for the monks, and the monks are praying for the soldiers. He — the shepherd — usually does neither ; his business is to eat and drink his fill, to enjoy himself to his heart's content. A devout soldier, a knight with a rosary in his hand — what an absurdity ; that tickles him ; he must laugh at the very idea. But the Cid explains to him that a knight may very well be a good Christian ; for in fighting the heathen he does his duty toward God. At this a voice is heard from behind a bush, “Not by fighting alone are the heavens gained !” It is the voice of a leprous beggar, who, having gone astray, had fallen into a ditch, where for two days he has lain without any food. The soldiers and the shepherd, dreading contagion, refuse to help him in his sorry plight. But the Cid seizes the leper's hand, which is covered with hideous wounds, and kisses it. The beggar promises him the heavens for this act of charity. The Cid then spreads his cloak over the wretch ; and

then sits down to share his meal with him, eating from the same platter ; while the mere sight of the loathsome leper is sufficient to provoke a feeling of nausea in the others, and deprive them of their robust appetite. The shepherd most pitifully watches the ham and the wine rapidly vanish before his greedy eyes. Then the Cid urges the leprous beggar to go to sleep : he will keep watch over him. But he himself is soon overpowered by an irresistible slumber. Upon his awakening, the leper has disappeared. The Cid sees his footprints upon the rocks ; and, his flowing white garments floating in the air, Saint Lazarus — for the miserable leprous beggar was none else — bestows his blessing upon him, and then rises heavenward. — Here we have the mysticism of the Middle Ages. The Cid has already conquered all the worldly goods ; he now, by an act of Christian charity, and above all, of Christian humility, has won eternal bliss. The Cid and the shepherd, the saint and the leper, side by side, — what an intimate blending of the sublime and the commonplace, of the ideal and real.

That episode having taken place far away from Burgos, another scene is here interposed



to fill the gap caused by the Cid's return to court. Again we meet the king with his council. Aragon has delegated Don Martin Gonzáles, some sort of a giant, a veritable Matamoros, to settle, by means of a duel, the pending dispute over the possession of Calahorra. But there being no Castilian who dares fight the giant, the king decides to conquer the contested region with his army. Don Martin and the Cid are then announced. Don Martin's impertinent and provoking attitude irritates Rodrigo, and a hot quarrel, in by no means polite language, ensues between them. They both repair to a place near the frontier of Castile and Aragon, to fight out the duel which is to settle the Calahorra trouble. Don Martin, confident of victory, hopes at the same time to gain the hand of Jimena and her fortune, for he has heard of the king's public decree. Jimena, having received from him a letter to that effect, and expecting Rodrigo to succumb to the feared giant, hastily dons a white nuptial robe, and hurries over to court; her suspense and anxiety are wrought to the highest pitch, and she must needs at once learn the result. To mark the time taken

up by the duel, another scene is here inserted, in which the king and his son are seen engaged in a violent quarrel in full council : Don Sancho, namely, opposes his father's plan to divide the royal domains among his children, for he desires to be sole heir to the entire country. Jimena arrives in time to hear the outcome of the duel. It is announced that a knight has just arrived from Aragon, carrying with him Rodrigo's head, and asking for the privilege of placing it at her feet. Then, at last, Jimena's long-restrained tears burst forth. She proudly avows her love for Rodrigo, and all she has suffered in sacrificing that love to her duty and honor. She begs the king to allow her to retire to a cloister, and compel Don Martin to content himself with her fortune. Suddenly, there appears — Rodrigo ! Why, he explains, a knight from Aragon, with Ródrigo's head, was heralded. Is he not coming from Aragon ? and, thank God, not without a head — Don Martin's is outside on the point of his lance. And he places Rodrigo's head at her feet, for, indeed, the king's decree did not specify whether this head was to be on the trunk, or severed from it. But should she wish the

head alone, she might immediately cut it off herself with his sword. This logic proves irresistible, and Jimena, yielding to the pressure brought to bear upon her by the king, the marriage is celebrated that very evening. Thus the *comedia famosa* is concluded with a practical joke—and by Rodrigo's union with Jimena, about one year after he killed her father, while without, from the point of Rodrigo's lance, the giant's bloody head looks down upon the wedding jollifications.

The third act presents still less coherence than the second, and a greater number of disconnected episodes. Nearly one quarter of the act is taken up by the leper scene alone. Our attention is diverted by all sorts of political affairs ; Doña Urraca's apprehension for her future after the king's death, and her enmity with the prince ; the king's resolutions concerning the fate of his possessions, and Don Sancho's opposition to his plans ; and finally, the dispute over Calahorra, with which, however, the interest of the two lovers is adroitly mingled. Upon the whole, the relation between Rodrigo and Jimena is but little touched upon. We do not, indeed, lose sight of Rod-

rigo, but we do not see him as a lover; he appears as a charitable and humble Christian; and in the duel with Don Martin, he fights for his country, not for his love. Rodrigo's character has been rendered more complete, as have also the characters of some of the other personages; but the unity of dramatic effect has been destroyed, and the tragical element gradually vanishing away.

## 2. THE CID COMPARED WITH THE MOCEDADES DEL CID

### A. *First Act*

The first scene, the knighting of Rodrigue, is left out. The characters are supposed to be only about twenty-four hours before us, and they cannot, therefore, develop from their beginnings. That scene is, besides, in all its details, so faithful to the Spanish mediæval usages that Corneille must needs omit it. Nor do we assist here at the birth of the love of the infanta and Chimène for Rodrigue. It is for his fine physical qualities that Rodrigue is admired in the Spanish play. "How well the armor becomes you. . . . How robust, how well built

he is," the king declares. The infanta's language is also full of similar praise: "A brave knight he will be, gallant and valorous. With what strength, ease, and grace he sat in his saddle and broke a lance; how he saluted, and at the same time gave his horse the spurs!" No such admiration for the hero's physical strength and dexterity is found in the *Cid*; it is his courage and the moral beauty of his character alone that are brought out in relief.

At the opening of the *Cid*, Rodrigue and Chimène have for some time been in love. Moreover, their parents know of their mutual affection and have virtually assented to their union. In the first scene, Elvire, the *suivante*, informs Chimène that her father approves of her inclination, and that Don Diègue will ask him for her hand that very day, after the king's council, at which a governor will be elected for the prince. The marriage, then, is almost a matter of certainty, and this renders the conflict more intense than in the original.

The council scene is omitted. The prince does not appear in the *Cid*, and the selection of a governor for him is of no intrinsic interest. The council, therefore, is barely mentioned, it

being of importance only in so far as it leads up to the outrage suffered by Don Diègue — the starting-point and cause of the tragic conflict.

The clash between him and the count occurs accordingly not in the council-chamber; it takes place in a square before the royal palace. Upon their leaving the council together, the two men are all alone. — This is the only stirring event that is represented upon the stage; the others, as the count's death, Rodrigue's duel with Don Sanche in the *Cid*, with Don Martin in the original, happen off the stage in both plays, and are merely related to the spectators; the battle with the Moors occurs upon the stage in the original, but not in the *Cid*.

In the Spanish play Don Diègue's outburst of rage and despair, and his meetings with his sons, occur in his house, as does also Rodrigue's soliloquy. \*In the *Cid*, the entire action is laid upon the open square before the palace. By means of this conventional arrangement, the continual shifting of the action from place to place is obviated, and the connection between the incidents thus kept up. Among the many inconvenients of this stage artifice is, that fre-

quently events which, by their very nature, require privacy, must be placed in a public thoroughfare. It is quite within the limits of probability, Corneille believes, that conversations and quarrels, like the one between the count and Don Diègue for instance, should happen in such a place. But he does have some misgivings as to the propriety of making Don Diègue bewail his misfortune in an open square; the old man, he concedes, could not do this without attracting crowds of people around him; and this would lead to complications which the poet is unwilling to deal with. The suitable place for Don Diègue's furious outbreak would, the poet holds, be his own house; but this could not be accomplished without a change of scene which, as was said, must remain the same throughout the play. This difficulty seems to have not a little preoccupied Corneille's mind; and this is the possible solution he suggests: "Par une fiction de théâtre on peut s'imaginer que Don Diègue et le comte, sortant du palais du roi, avancement toujours en se querellant, et sont arrivés devant la maison du premier, lorsqu'il reçoit le soufflet qui l'oblige à y entrer, pour y chercher du secours. Si cette fiction

poétique ne vous satisfait point, laissons-le dans la place publique, et disons que le concours du peuple autour de lui après cette offense, et les offres de service que lui font les premiers amis qui s'y rencontrent, sont des circonstances que le roman ne doit pas oublier, mais que ces menues actions ne servant de rien à la principale, il n'est pas besoin que le poète s'en embarrasse sur la scène, . . . ces sortes d'accompagnements ont toujours mauvaise grâce au théâtre." — But, it may be objected, crowds are sure to gather also when the count disarms Don Diègue, or when Rodrigue soliloquizes in that same square : the very same difficulty is met here, as indeed in some of the other scenes. If it is at all admitted, for the sake of theatrical convenience or owing to mechanical stage necessities, that all the events of a play may be placed in a square or street, it will not do to be too fastidious with certain particular events merely because they may seem to be less liable than others to occur in such places. The fact that Corneille sees himself compelled to complicate the conventionality of the unity of place, with which he starts out, by additional theatrical "fictions," proves



the unsatisfactoriness of that classical canon. That conventionality has its decided inconvenients, and the poet must simply put up with them ; or else reject it altogether and adopt, if the material conditions of the stage permit, the much more practical and rational expedient of the multiplicity of place.

The scene where Don Diègue tries the strength and courage of his three sons is likewise left out ; his two youngest sons do not appear in the play at all. Instead of biting Rodrigue's finger, the desperate man appeals to his moral courage and his honor. In lieu of the rather lengthy exhortation of Don Diègue, we have, in the *Cid*, a lively dialogue, and Rodrigue's anxious impatience to learn the name of his father's offender is put to a severe test. ✱ In the *Cid*, moreover, Don Diègue, while urging his son toward vengeance, is fully aware of his love for Chimène : the tragic conflict is therefore intensified at the very outset.

Rodrigue, reduced to the sad alternative of either killing the father of Chimène or leaving the blot of disgrace upon his family, soliloquizes in stanzas, all ending with the rhyme *Chimène-peine*. He analyzes his feelings, rea-

soning now with his love, now with his honor. There is less of this subtle argumentation in the original, where Rodrigue speaks of the count's courage, and apostrophizes the sword his father gave him.

“ O Dieu ! l'étrange peine !  
 En cet affront mon père est l'offensé  
 Et l'offenseur le père de Chimène ! ”

is translated from, —

“ Mi padre el ofendido, extraña pena !  
 Y el ofensor el padre de Jimena.”

Or, at the end of the last stanza : —

“ Ne soyons plus en peine,  
 Puisque aujourd'hui mon père est l'offensé,  
 Si l'offenseur est père de Chimène,”

from, —

“ Habiendo sido  
 Mi padre el ofendido,  
 Poco importa que fuese, amarga pena !  
 El ofensor el padre de Jimena ! ”

These stanzas, and especially the rhymes mentioned, are rather artificial, and ill-suited to the deep agitation of Rodrigue. Corneille himself strongly disapproved of them. In the *Examen of Andromède* (1660), he claims the

right to occasionally make use of stanzas in his plays. He adds however : “ Mais il faut éviter le trop d'affectation. C'est par là que les stances du Cid sont inexcusables et les mots de peine et Chimène, qui font la dernière rime de chaque strophe marquent un jeu du côté du poète, qui n'a rien de naturel du côté de l'acteur.”

However, some of the conceits of the original, Corneille did not imitate, as : —

“ Qué haré, suerte atrevida,  
Si él es el alma que me dió la vida?  
Qué haré, terrible calma!  
Si ella es la vida que me tiene el alma? ”

### *B. Second Act*

Don Arias, instructed by the king, attempts to induce the count to ask Don Diègue's pardon. Don Gomes, however, refuses : —

“ Je l'avoue entre nous, quand je lui fis l'affront,  
J'eus le sang un peu chaud, et le bras un peu prompt,  
Mais puisque c'en est fait, le coup est sans remède.”

These lines correspond to, —

“ Confieso que fué locura,  
Mas no la quiero enmendar.”

This may serve as an instance of the greater simplicity and conciseness of the language of Guillem de Castro. His style, when free of conceits — which likewise abound in Corneille — is more natural, and in its naïveté frequently approaches the popular tone of the old Spanish ballads, some of which are even incorporated in the *Mocedades del Cid*.

In the original, the count maintains that honor can be satisfied only by the death of the offender. The same idea prevailed of course among the French nobility; thousands fell in duels, and since the time of Henry IV. the severest punishments were inflicted upon such combatants. Richelieu, too, had to contend against the mania of the duel. This may account for Corneille's having left out, in later editions, the following lines: —

“ Les satisfactions n'apaisent point une âme,  
 Qui les reçoit a tort, qui les fait se diffamer,  
 Et de pareils accords l'effet le plus commun  
 Est de déshonorer deux hommes au lieu d'un.”

The original reads: —

“ Satisfaccion?

Ni darla ni recibirla.

\* \* \* \* \*

Él que la dé y la recibe  
 Es muy cierto quedar mal,  
 Porque el uno pierde honor,  
 Y el otro no cobra nada;  
 El remitir a la espada  
 Los agravios es mejor."

The count is not a whit less arrogant, nor  
 less conscious of his power than the Spanish  
 vassal in de Castro: —

"Un jour seul ne perd pas un homme tel que moi,  
 Tout l'état périra, s'il faut que je périsse.

Perderme ? No,

Que los hombres como yo  
 Tienen mucho que perder.  
 Y ha de perderse Castilla  
 Antes que yo."

But in the original, it is in the presence of  
 the king that the count uses such language  
 and, what is more, dares strike Don Diègue, and  
 boldly defies the monarch himself.

The encounter between the count and Rod-  
 rigue is a close imitation of de Castro, espe-  
 cially in the quick, animated dialogue between  
 them: —

"À moi, comte, deux mots. — Parle. — Ôte-moi d'un  
 doute.

Connais-tu bien Don Diègue ? — Oui. — Parlons bas,  
 écoute."

The Spanish, however, is more forcible yet:—

“Conde!—Quién es?—A esta parte  
Quiero decirte quién soy.—  
Que me quieres?—Quiero hablarte.  
Aquel viejo que esta allí  
Sabes quién es?—Ya lo sé,  
Por qué lo dices?—Por qué?  
Habla bajo, escucha.”

The very first words in reply to Rodrigue's “Conde!” are “Quién es?” Indeed, no words better befitting both his character and the circumstance could have been placed in the count's mouth. Hardly a few hours have elapsed since he saw Rodrigue, and now he will not even know who he is. The words “ôte-moi d'un doute” are due to the necessity of a rhyme with “écoute.” And the words “parlons bas, écoute,” the two men being alone, are altogether uncalled for; in de Castro, where the clash, Rodrigue's provocation, the quarrel that follows, and partly also the duel, all happen in the presence of the kinsfolk and friends of both parties, those words have a direct bearing upon the situation. One may easily fancy how Rodrigue, with a hushed voice, and turning his head and hand slightly,

points to "aquel viejo" — his old father who exhorts him to the combat. Guillem de Castro's scene is much superior to Corneille's, and by far more impressive; indeed, the excitement into which the spectator is wrought must be overwhelming. The constant tendency to simplify events, and thus render them more intelligible and more likely; the omissions necessitated by the unities; and, furthermore, the fear of overdoing and exaggeration, caused Corneille to drop the environment — the milieu — and confine himself to a dialogue which, though it takes place between the chief actors, is far from being an adequate substitute of the original scene, so highly dramatic in its intense realism and powerful effect. — Upon the other hand, the tragic conflict is somewhat heightened in the *Cid*; for the count is aware that his daughter loves the man whom he means to kill.

The characters, too, suffer a material change. Thus, in the French play, both the count and Rodrigue, in spite of their violent tone, keep within bounds of due politeness; they treat each other like courteous noblemen, and even compliment each other mutually. In the orig-

inal, they utter most formidable threats, nor are they any too scrupulous in the choice of their expressions. Indeed, the attitude of the count is essentially different. He does not for a moment cast off his aristocratic dignity. He would be glad, he avers, to be able to destine his daughter to Rodrigue; he is charmed to see him set his duty above his love, and show that high virtue behooving a "chevalier parfait," such as he would desire for his son-in-law. And he concludes:—

"Viens, tu fais ton devoir, et le fils dégénère  
Qui survit un moment à l'honneur de son père."

There is, on the contrary, a great deal of swaggering brutality in the original. Instead of "jeune présomptueux!" the count there cries to Rodrigue, "quita, rapaz!" He calls him derisively "novel caballero," a puppy who "has milk on his lips." In his reply, Rodrigue swears that he will mix that milk of his lips with the blood of the count's breast. And when Rodrigue becomes more aggressive, the count gently hints that, even as he slapped his father's cheek, so will he now give him a thousand kicks. In short, we have here knights of



the eleventh century, or pretty much so, whereas Corneille's personages are nobles of the seventeenth century, men who despatch their adversaries politely, with a smile and an apology on their lips.

We now see the infanta consoling Chimène, whose happiness has been so suddenly destroyed. They do not yet know what has occurred between the count and Rodrigue; but Chimène apprehends a challenge on the part of her lover; and when a page reports having seen him engaged in a quarrel with her father near the palace, she rushes out wildly to forestall the impending calamity. While the infanta expresses to her *suivante* her revived hopes of obtaining Rodrigue for herself—instead of turning him over to Chimène as has been her intention; while, in the scene succeeding, the king orders Don Alonse to arrest the count, and, at the same time, communicates the news of the approach of the Moors—Chimène precipitates herself upon the square before the court. But she is too late. Don Alonse returns and brings the sad tidings of the count's death, and announces that Chimène is on her way to the palace to demand redress

from the king. The dramatic interest is considerably weakened by the declaration made by the king : —

“Ce que le comte a fait semble avoir mérité  
Ce digne châtiment de sa témérité.”

The scene in which Chimène and Don Diègue appear before the king is, like most of the other great scenes of the play, imitated after de Castro; the development is the same, and here and there a few words are translated. It is introduced by Chimène's desperate cry, “Sire, sire, justice!” just as in the original, “Justicia, justicia pido!” Some exaggerations in Chimène's language are imitated and even improved upon by Corneille: —

“Ce sang qui tout sorti fume encor de courroux  
De se voir répandu pour d'autres que pour vous.”

This conceit, not found in de Castro, is indeed not objectionable in itself; but Voltaire, in his *Commentaries* on Corneille, has a right to ask whether such words are becoming a daughter while her father breathes his last. Scudéry, enlightened though he was by his envy, to use Voltaire's expression, failed to censure

such *concetti*; they were in the taste of the time, he himself indulging in them more freely than his contemporaries.

“Le sang sur la poussière écrivait mon devoir,”

is a translation of, —

“Y escribió en este papel  
Con sangre mi obligacion.”

Guillem de Castro’s lines, —

“Yo llegué . . .  
Á mi padre, que mi habló  
Por la boca de la herida, . . .”

are thus developed by Corneille : —

“Ou plutôt sa valeur en cet état réduite  
Me parlait par sa plaie, et hâtait ma poursuite;  
Et pour se faire entendre au plus juste des rois,  
Par cette triste bouche elle empruntait ma voix.”

By that sad mouth — the wound — the count’s valor asks Chimène to lend to it her voice, so that it may be heard by the most just of kings!

On the other hand, some of de Castro’s most exaggerated metaphors are omitted by Corneille, thus : —

“A tus ojos poner quiero  
Letras que en mi alma están  
Y en los míos, como iman,  
Sacan lagrimas de acero.”

This conceit, as well as the count's blood upon Chimène's handkerchief, and upon the withered cheek of Don Diègue, are wanting in the *Cid*. It is not by such crude means that Corneille strives to produce his effects. The sight of blood displeased the public of his time, and was not tolerated upon the classic stage. In the original, Don Diègue's declaration that his outrage had to be washed off with the count's blood is far from being a mere figure of speech; that blood actually is on his face, and it is with the most vivid details he describes how he himself placed it there:—

“Yo ví, Señor,  
Que en aquel pecho enemigo  
La espada de mi Rodrigo  
Entraba a buscar mi honor.  
Llegué, y halléle sin vida,  
Y puse con alma exenta  
El corazon en mi afrenta  
Y los dedos en mi herida.  
Lavé con sangre el lugar  
Adonde la mancha estaba;  
Porque el honor que se lava,  
Con sangre se ha de lavar.”

In the French play, the cheek of Don Diègue is not besmeared with blood, and these lines have no room in it.

### *C. Third Act*

No sooner has Rodrigue slain the count than he goes to hear his sentence from the mouth of Chimène. The scene between Rodrigue and Elvire, and the one between Rodrigue and Chimène, are both imitated after the Spanish model; the ideas and feelings expressed are much the same, and quite a number of lines are translated. The scene between the two lovers is one of the most beautiful of the tragedy; but its effect is less strong than that of the corresponding scene of the original, from which it is almost entirely borrowed. The language in de Castro is simple and natural, while in the *Cid* the lovers vie with each other in conceits, clever repartees, and shrewd arguments, and discuss the conflict between love and duty with a subtlety and acuteness entirely incompatible with their deep grief. Never have two lovers talked more sophistically. Their ingenuity in discovering all sorts of points of honor is simply astound-

ing. Rodrigue offers his sword to Chimène to kill him, saying that he killed her father not only to avenge his and satisfy honor, but also to deserve of her love. Chimène replies that he, by doing his duty, has taught her to do hers, and that honor now commands her to avenge her father. To which Rodrigue retorts that by slaying the count he showed himself worthy of her, and that she must now take his life if she desires to be worthy of him; and he again offers her his sword, declaring that he will only be too happy to die “*d’un coup si beau.*” Chimène declines to kill him, but says she will see that vengeance is wreaked by others. But, says Rodrigue, it was he himself that killed her father; why, then, should she employ another hand than her own. And Chimène replies that he committed the murder unaided; neither would she, therefore, owe her revenge to his love or to his despair. “*Rigoureux point d’honneur!*” exclaims Rodrigue,—indeed, so rigorous as to offend both art and reality.

The other two scenes of this act are likewise imitated from the Spanish author. Don Diègue is waiting to meet his son; when Rodrigue at

last arrives, from the house of Chimène, he sends him against the Moors, who are threatening Seville by water. Don Diègue's language in these scenes, as indeed all throughout the play, in its vigor and dignity favorably contrasts with that of the other characters. At times it closely follows the original:—

“Touche ces cheveux blancs à qui tu rends l'honneur;  
Viens baiser cette joue, et reconnais la place  
Ou fut empreint l'affront que ton courage efface.  
Toca las blancas canas que me honraste,  
Llega la tierna boca a la mejilla  
Donde la mancha de mi honor quitaste.”

\* It may here be observed how the love of Chimène and Rodrigue is made by Corneille the turning-point of the play. For what in the original is merely an episode, though a very important one, becomes in the *Cid* the main element of the tragedy. In the Spanish play Don Diègue knows nothing of his son's love, and, consequently, does not speak of it. Neither does Rodrigue, who just left Chimène, say aught of his love. In the *Cid*, however, Don Diègue at once says to his son,—

“Ne mêle point de soupirs à ma joie.”

In the original, Don Diègue sends his son against the enemy merely in order to conciliate the king's wrath, and it is remembered how, during Rodrigue's expedition, we forget all about Chimène, our attention being directed to the other features of the play. But here she remains throughout the one thought of Rodrigue; Don Diègue himself thinks of his son as of a lover; exhorting him to go and fight the Moors, he points out that his conquest of the foe is the sole means of appeasing Chimène and regaining her love: —

“ Forcé par ta vaillance  
La justice au pardon, et Chimène au silence.  
Si tu l'aimes, apprends que revenir vainqueur  
C'est l'unique moyen de regagner son coeur.”

#### *D. Fourth Act*

In the original, we follow Rodrigue on his campaign, assist at his accidental meeting with the princess in the king's country-seat, witness the battle with the Moors and the capture of their king. We see the choleric temper of the prince Don Sancho bursting out against his fencing-master, and his violent quarrel with his



sister ; and lastly hear the captive king report the exploits of Rodrigue. All this is omitted in the French play. Instead, we see here, before Rodrigue's return, Elvire bringing word to Chimène of his victory over the Moors during the preceding night. The infanta comes to persuade Chimène to sacrifice her vengeance to the public weal ; but she is only pleading her own cause, for now that Rodrigue has won such signal distinction, her hopes of marrying him herself have again revived. But Chimène is as relentless as ever. The king, however, re-admits Rodrigue into his favor, and bestows upon him his gracious pardon, saying, —

“ J'excuse ta chaleur à venger ton offense,  
Et l'état défendu me parle en ta défense.  
Crois que dorénavant Chimène a beau parler,  
Je ne l'écoute plus que pour la consoler.”

This ingenuous utterance deprives the plot of all tragic tension, for it is quite clear now that the endeavors of Chimène will have no result whatever, and that Rodrigue's life is not in the least endangered. This is the second time now that that most awkward king forestalls the solution, thus considerably weakening the interest of the action. — Upon his demand Rodrigue gives

an account of the battle against the Moors ; this narrative, told in simple, fluent, straightforward and vigorous language, is certainly among the most vivid and eloquent in the classic tragedy. \* But however beautiful it be, it may well be doubted whether it fully makes up for the tableau of the Spanish play, in whose place it stands. For we get here but a pale reflection, as it were, of reality — which reaches us only after it has passed through the mind of Rodrigue, and which we perceive with his eyes instead of our own. — Corneille does not strive to directly affect the senses, and, as a result, the total impression is far from being strong and vivid enough, and the emotions are not sufficiently aroused. \* The unities of time and place prevent the poet from removing Rodrigue to any distance : they help preserve the unity of action, which would be impaired by following Rodrigue upon his various adventures. We would be led astray from what principally interests us ; the tragical conflict would be slackened, and but slow to revive when again brought before us. Corneille does not attempt to disport our imagination, or cater to curiosity ; his endeavor is rather to satisfy the demands of

reason. To frequent changes of picturesque tableaux, he prefers the concentration upon one psychological fact. Large crowds do not appear upon the classic stage, owing to its small size. Nor would they present much interest to refined spectators, but rather divert their attention from the chief characters. The spectacle of a battle might do for a popular performance well enough, but is considered beneath the dignity of a tragedy. Hosts of fighting Spaniards and Moors might indeed move a crowd of simple-minded amusement-seekers, but must leave indifferent a select audience, or even provoke a smile of sceptical incredulity. Besides, who among that aristocratic public care aught for common troopers? Have they not there the brave leader himself, the real victor, the one personage of any consequence? For his heroic narrative, in that noble, lofty tone, in that choice language, they would fain sacrifice all the Castilians and Moors in the world.\* The fact is, the Spanish play addresses itself to all classes, satisfying all of its elements, while Corneille's *Cid* appeals to the nobility alone, expressing its ideals, and conforming to its tastes and beliefs.

A great variety of dissimilar and improbable events, with the whole globe for the scene of action; a motley agglomeration of clamorous sounds and glaring colors; the freest scope for the creations of fancy; a direct and overpowering affection of the senses—such were the features wherewith the romances of the period were dazzling the imagination of the many. But the tragedy, which best embodied the reaction against the romanesque spirit of the age, held that art in uttermost contempt. To be moved, the nobles wanted no such strong appeals: they preferred a discreet suggestion to a great tableau—the lifelike representation of the victorious captain to the doubtful picture of a battle.

In the Spanish play, right after the return of Rodrigue from his expedition, Chimène appears at court, pressing her suit against him, and the king, though extending a most cordial welcome to him, and even embracing him in her presence, sees himself compelled to send him again into exile. During this absence of his, Chimène for the third time now comes to demand justice, and upon her request, as is remembered, the king issues a

decree, pledging her hand and fortune to him who will bring her lover's head. — In the *Cid*, Rodrigue is not banished, and Chimène — who appears here but twice as a suppliant — is not held out as a prize, at the mercy of the first-come adventurer of the land. It is one of her suitors, Don Sanche, — a character, moreover, encountered early in the play, — who, with her own consent, undertakes to avenge her by fighting the duel with Rodrigue — and there is no political motive here for this combat.

It is the third appearance of Chimène before the king that is imitated in this act. As in the original, Chimène, after fainting at the false news of Rodrigue's death brought in to test her love by order of the king, pretends it was the joy at the tidings that has overwhelmed her. But here, as indeed throughout the play, she is more subtle and ingenious than in the original where she opens her plea with the naïve and touching words of an old ballad. Moreover, Corneille here, as upon other occasions, improves upon the original. Chimène, namely, declares that supposing it was grief that caused her to swoon, it was

the grief that Rodrigue died a glorious death for his country, instead of being hanged on the gallows in expiation of his murder, as he deserved. And she winds up by saying, that she rejoices in his victory over the enemy; for his fame being so great now, he is a by far worthier object for her sacred vengeance than before.

In Guillem de Castro's play, the duel, as was seen, is fought primarily for the possession of Calahorra. The political motive is altogether absent from the French play, and thus the element of love is again made more prominent. Don Sanche, moreover, as was said, is not a stranger to Chimène, a new person appearing suddenly to hasten the solution—a *deus ex machina*; from the very first scene of the play he has been known as her wooer; he even had upon a previous occasion offered his sword to avenge her father's death.

### *E. Fifth Act*

In the *Mocedades del Cid*, it is to the boundary between Castile and Aragon that Don Martin and Rodrigue go to fight the duel. For

the third time it is that Rodrigue leaves Burgos : to mark the lapse of time thus occasioned, two scenes are inserted. These acquaint us with new events by way of introduction to the second part of the play ; but interrupt the continuous development of the chief action. Again a council is held, at which Don Diego is present. The life of the Cid, the brave general, is menaced by a giant, his eventual death entailing the loss of Calahorra, a Spanish province. Does the king express his uneasiness at the impending peril, or does the father show any anxiety at the fate of his son ? By no means. The Cid and Calahorra itself are completely forgotten by the king, by Don Diego, and, in all probability, also by the spectators. Instead, the old king makes his last will and testament, and our turbulent prince violently protests against the partition of the royal domains. These two scenes are of course omitted by Corneille, who strives to concentrate the interest upon the main events of the play. Owing to this omission, there is not sufficient material left for the fifth act, and this may account for the second visit of Rodrigue to Chimène, the scene which opens

that act. Of all the greater scenes, this is the only one not imitated from the *Mocedades del Cid*, and it may well be doubted whether this addition constitutes an improvement upon the original.

Before going to fight the duel, then, with Don Sanche, Rodrigue comes to bid Chimène a last farewell. Already on his first visit he begged her to kill him. Then, says he, she did not deign to take his life with her own hand ; and he will be happy now to die for the sake of her honor. His faithful love forbids him to defend himself, and he will adore the hand of the man that will do away with him. Apparently, Rodrigue is anxious to hear from Chimène that she still loves him. But she shrewdly argues that his honor demands that he defend himself, and vanquish his adversary. Whereupon he proves to her that the lustre of his honor, already so dazzling owing to his victory over the Moors, will, on the contrary, grow more brilliant, were he to die for her honor of his own free will. Finally, her persuasions failing to prevail upon Rodrigue, Chimène prays him not to let her fall into the hands of Don Sanche : —



“ Va, songe à ta défense,  
Pour forcer mon devoir, pour m’imposer silence,  
Et si tu sens pour moi ton coeur encore épris,  
Sors vainqueur d’un combat dont Chimène est le prix.”

This scene fairly bristles with arguments and subtleties entirely incompatible with genuine feeling. In his *Examen* of the *Cid*, Corneille himself draws attention to the insincerity and artificiality in that scene — as indeed in that of Rodrigue’s first visit to Chimène, in the third act: “ Les pensées de la première des deux (scènes) sont quelquefois trop spirituelles pour partir de personnes fort affligées. . . . Pour ne déguiser rien, cette offre que fait Rodrigue de son épée à Chimène, et cette protestation de se laisser tuer par Don Sanche, ne vous plairaient pas maintenant. Ces beautés étaient de mise en ce temps-là, et ne le seraient plus en celui-ci. La première est dans l’original espagnol, et l’autre est tirée sur ce modèle. Toutes les deux ont fait leur effet en ma faveur ; mais je ferais scrupule d’en étaler de pareilles à l’avenir sur notre théâtre.”

While Rodrigue is away to meet Don Sanche, the *infanta* bemoans, in dull stanzas, her unhappy love. Then she talks with her *servante*

about the duel and Rodrigue. She yet has some lingering hope of winning him, but at last she generously decides to give him to Chimène. In another scene, Chimène and Elvire, both in the greatest suspense, likewise speak about the combat. \* These talks are by no means entertaining ; but tedious and tiresome as they are, they are more appropriate than the episodic scenes in the original. The threatening catastrophe is at least not forgotten, the attention is fixed, and the final outcome holds a larger place in our interest than it does in the *Mocedades del Cid*.

Chimène and Elvire are interrupted by the return of Don Sanche. Upon the bidding of Rodrigue, by whom he has been disarmed, he comes to offer his sword to Chimène. Rodrigue could not bring it himself, he explains, his duty having called him to the king. At sight of the sword, Chimène is led to believe that Don Sanche has killed Rodrigue ; she obstinately refuses to listen to an explanation, and hastens straightway to the king's palace. Although there is a change of place here, there is no scene inserted to mark the time she needs to reach the court. There she finds Don Sanche. But

curiously enough Rodrigue has not yet arrived. Thus confirmed in the belief of his death, she openly declares her love for him. It does not appear that Rodrigue had been in the palace. What about the urgent duty that had called him to the king? The artifice is transparent. Chimène must needs again confess her love before the king: hence also her improbable misunderstanding with Don Sanche.

Already upon a former occasion, by the false report of Rodrigue's death, Chimène was forced into a public confession of her love, which, however, she withdrew when she heard that she had been imposed upon. This deception is repeated in the Spanish play by means of a trick, played upon her this time by Rodrigue himself; he arrives, it is remembered, with two heads, as he jestingly puts it, one upon his shoulders and the other outside on the point of his lance. To elicit from Chimène this second declaration, Corneille could not very well resort to such a rude joke. Something else had to be invented, and hence both the strange misunderstanding on the part of Chimène, and the unexplained tardiness of Rodrigue.

Dramatically weak and artificial as the end

is in both plays, it is, in the *Cid*, more elevated in feeling, and also more in keeping with the dignity of the characters. That brutal jest contrasts most singularly with the generosity shown by Rodrigue toward his vanquished adversary. So far indeed from being brutal, the characters in the *Cid* are entirely too noble: they not only all, without a single exception, act most nobly, but ever and ever discourse upon their noble sentiments in most noble language. Thus Don Sanche declares that, though conquered, he feels happy; nay, even cherishes his defeat, for it renders possible “le beau succès d’une amour si parfaite.” So, too, the inevitable infanta, who arrives bringing Rodrigue with her in order once more to give him to Chimène; her perpetual magnanimity is positively tiresome. Rodrigue, of course, is much too generous to claim Chimène as the prize of his victory. Again he lays his head at her feet — for the third time now — and bursts into an exaggerated rapture of amorous enthusiasm.

The Rodrigo of the *Mocedades del Cid* is an idealized portrait of the mediæval knight; generous to his friends and fanatically jealous of his honor; loyal to his king and gallant toward

ladies ; devout and superstitious ; rugged of manner and cruel to his enemy ; straightforward in his actions, and plain and blunt in his speech. The Rodrigue of the *Cid* is the courtier of the time of Louis XIII., idealized. He is refined and elegant, polished and dignified, and above all, magnanimous to his foe. But he is rhetorical and stilted, artificial and sophistic, bombastic and *précieux*. To be sure he moved in the Hôtel Rambouillet, read the romances and lyrics fashionable in the year 1636, and very likely himself rhymed gallant sonnets, and warbled sweet and tender madrigals.

It is no longer possible for Chimène to refuse Rodrigue after the open avowal of her love. She had, moreover, virtually pledged herself when she exhorted him to defeat Dou Sanche : —

“Sors vainqueur d’un combat dont Chimène est le prix !”

The king grants her one year for mourning.

Thus Chimène, after persistently clamoring for the death of the man who slew her father, consents, the very day after the perpetration of the deed, to marry him — with the body of the murdered count yet lying in the house awaiting burial. In the original, it is only about a year

after the catastrophe that Chimène yields to the marriage.

Poetically, the conflict betwixt love and duty is susceptible of widely divergent solutions. To cite, for comparison's sake, but two instances. In Lope de Vega's *Estrella de Sevilla*, the heroine's lover kills her only brother; Estrella frees the murderer from prison, forgives him, and then retires into a cloister: here we have complete abnegation and self-sacrifice, along with most passionate love. Her duty triumphs over her love, and that duty, moreover, spells neither vengeance nor honor. On the other hand, in *Romeo and Juliet*, passion has no counter-balance whatsoever; it holds sole and undivided sway. In the *Cid*, there is neither this blind passion nor that angelic resignation; duty and an acute sense of honor battle against love, and this conflict is the characteristic element in Corneille's classic play; but it is not duty that carries the day.

The *dénoûment* in *Romeo and Juliet* consists in the death of the unfortunate lovers—a highly tragical solution, and one brought about by sheer fatality. In *Estrella de Sevilla*, the lovers remain alive, but they do not become

united. Realizing the terrible gap that separates her from the murderer, Estrella, by a volitional act of her own, renounces her happiness, and withdraws from the world. Surely, this close is tragical, and it is also moral. In the *Cid*, the lovers are left safe and sound, and are even joined in marriage. The conflicting elements are reconciled in an entirely optimistic sense—the conclusion is not tragical. Strictly speaking, the *Cid* is not a tragedy. It is, as originally entitled, a tragi-comedy—a *tragédie heureuse*. And inasmuch as finally love prevails over duty, common morality is disregarded. Honor alone—as understood in the seventeenth century in France—is satisfied in Corneille's *Cid*.

### 3. CHANGES UNDERGONE BY THE MOCEDAS DEL CID

In the comparison of Guillem de Castro's and Corneille's plays, there have been noted the chief differences in their general make-up, in the conceptions of the dramatic art held by the poets, in the construction of the plots, and in the portrayal of the characters; it has been

attempted to lay bare the manner in which the *Cid* of Corneille grew out of the *Mocedades del Cid*. It has been shown how the romantic play of Guillem de Castro became the classical play of Corneille. ~~✱~~Corneille's chief preoccupation was to attain intensity of tragical effect. To this effort were due almost all of the changes introduced by him. Thus, by the elimination of everything comic or grotesque, he satisfied one of the primary requirements of the classical theory of art, the strict separation of the tragic and comic elements — which leads to a greater intensity of effect. By the omission of all events foreign to the moral conflict, he achieved unity of action — which is essential for the intensity of effect. Again, the unity of action cannot be easily attained if the events are scattered through a long and frequently interrupted interval of time, and over different places; hence arises the need of the unities of time and place. Some of the principal events being, by the application of the three unities, discarded from the stage, they are replaced by narratives and conversations. All these eliminations render the drama simpler, clearer, more intelligible. Corneille's play thus



gains in cohesion, in simplicity, in unity of purpose, and in intensity of effect—qualities inherent in the classical work of art. On the other hand, the numerous incidents revealing the various phases in the development of the personages being omitted, the play loses in variety, in picturesqueness, and in completeness of character. Classicism, in the seventeenth century, was the formulation of the demands of rationalism in art; sentimentality, mysticism and superstition, the blending of the tragical with the grotesque, the exaggerations of the imagination—these were all equally banished, and the dramatic unities themselves are nothing else but the postulates of reason applied to the technique of the theatre.

It has, moreover, been seen how the main event seized upon by Corneille is conceived by him after his own manner; that a more thorough-going psychological analysis is attempted, the moral idea more emphasized, the tragic conflict heightened. The events of mediæval life, rude, romantic, of unbridled imagination, are either omitted or changed. All that is peculiarly Spanish or mediæval disappears. We have dwelt, in passing, on those changes. Physical

bravery is supplanted by moral courage, the rudeness and crudity reigning all through the Spanish play vanish, politeness and gallantry taking their place. The prowess of Rodrigo on horseback ; the testing by Don Diego of the courage of his sons ; his cheek besmeared with the count's blood, and the handkerchief of Jimena soaked therein ; the nicknames and threats exchanged between the count and Rodrigo ; the bullying of Don Martin ; the loathsome scene of the leper—all these have no place in Corneille's play. In a word, the manners undergo a total transformation. Nor do the characters remain the same. Don Sanche, in spite of his insignificance, is an improvement upon Don Martin. The infanta, too, differs from Doña Urraca ; although that feeble, lifeless character, wavering to and fro with the regularity of a pendulum, is not, by any means, a happy creation. Much more important, is the change introduced at the very beginning of the play ; Don Diègue and the count know about the love of Rodrigue and Chimène, who consider themselves as betrothed by the consent of their parents. It is easily seen that this simple alteration must intensify the tragical

conflict. The most important change, however, is that suffered by Rodrigue and Chimène. Chimène is made much more prominent, and the love of the two becomes the central fact around which pivot all the others. Never for a moment is our attention diverted from their love : it engrosses the minds of the spectators, and fills their hearts with emotional sympathy.

Such are the changes undergone by the *Mocedades del Cid*. The line of action, the main situations, are all preserved, and often closely imitated ; but the manners are altogether different, the characters intensified, new motives substituted, the moral conflict enhanced, the action unified and concentrated — the Spanish romantic epic drama has become a French classic tragedy.

## VI. LE MENTEUR

### 1. THE MENTEUR COMPARED WITH THE VERDAD SOSPECHOSA

NEARLY four years pass after the representation of the *Cid* without any sign from Corneille. The period between 1640 and 1644, however, is one of great activity for the poet, and marks the height of his development. *Horace*, *Cinna*, *Polyeucte*, *Pompée*, cross the boards in rapid succession. In 1644 Corneille again returns to the comedy with the *Menteur*; in the *Épître* prefixed to this play the author says: "Étant obligé au genre comique de ma première réputation, je ne pouvais l'abandonner tout-à-fait sans quelque espèce d'ingratitude. Il est vrai que comme, alors que je me hasardais à le quitter, je n'osai me fier à mes seules forces, et que pour m'élever à la dignité du tragique, je pris l'appui du grand Sénèque, . . . ainsi, quand je me suis résolu de repasser du héroïque au naïf,

je n'ai osé descendre de si haut sans m'assurer d'un guide, et me suis laissé conduire au fameux Lope de Vega, de peur de m'égarer dans les détours de tant d'intrigues que fait notre Menteur."

It was only in 1660, when he wrote his *Examins*, that Corneille discovered the *Verdad Sospechosa*, the model of his *Menteur*, to be the work of Ruiz de Alarcon, a contemporary of the old Lope de Vega Carpio. — Let us compare the two plays, and note the chief deviations of the *Menteur* from the original, the *Verdad Sospechosa* by Juan Ruiz de Alarcon y Mendoza.

#### A. First Act

Dorante, the liar, returns from Poitiers, where he has studied law, to the house of his father Géronte, a nobleman residing in Paris. The opening scenes present some difference from the original. In the French play, Géronte yields to his son's wish to leave Poitiers and come to Paris, because of the latter's intention to exchange the law for the military career. The ardent desire of the young man to quit the provincial town, and his Digests and Codes,

in order to lead a soldier's merry life in the gay capital, is no doubt intended by the poet as a trait which is to reveal at the very outset our hero's light-mindedness.

In the Spanish play, Don Beltran calls his son, Don García, who studies letters in the University of Salamanca under the guidance of a *letrado*, to Madrid, to take the place of his deceased brother at court. In the first scene, Don García, in student's attire, accompanied by his tutor, is most affectionately welcomed by his father. Don Beltran gives him Tristan, an old servant of the house — the *gracioso* of the play — to serve him as his valet.

In the second scene, Don Beltran inquires of the *letrado* whether his son has any vices. After first bringing out Don García's good qualities, the *letrado* confesses that his pupil has the habit of lying. Great astonishment and sorrow are shown by the honest Don Beltran. He would, he asserts, rather see his son squander his entire fortune in debauchery or gambling, or spend his days in fights and brawls; nay, his very death would be preferable by far to what is, he declares, the most detestable of all vices. Don Beltran, whose greatest desire it is to see his

son married, is in despair. For where is the well-bred girl, he asks, that would wed a man whose reputation as a liar has been established? So he concludes that Don García must marry at once, before the rumor of his vice has had time to spread abroad.

These two scenes are omitted in the *Menteur*. Géronte (Don Beltran) is ignorant of his son's fatal habit, and his reason for endeavoring to bring about a speedy marriage is to make sure of grandchildren, before the probable departure of Dorante — his only son — for the scene of war.

In the opening scene of the *Menteur*, Dorante, who has discarded his student's dress, and is accompanied by his valet Cliton, makes his début both in gallantry and lying. Like all the other scenes of any significance, this one is imitated after Alarcon. It is in the Tuileries that Dorante and Cliton inspect the *beau monde*; the place, in the original, is in the Platerías (to-day the Calla Mayor), at Madrid. The talk between them differs in the two plays. Tristan's satirical remarks about the starched high shirt-collars then in vogue in Spain, and his spirited description and classification of the

ladies in Madrid do not appear in the *Menteur*. Fresh from the province, Dorante, rather anxious to acquaint himself with the usages prevailing in the capital in the matter of gallantry, asks Cliton to inform him “comme en ce lieu l'on gouverne les dames.” But reality in the shape of two pretty girls in a coach, which stops in front of a shop, interrupts their gossip, and Cliton is forthwith despatched to find out from the coachman who they are. One of them, Clarice (Jacinta), slips, and the clever Dorante gallantly helps her to her feet. There follows an exchange of argumentative compliments, subtle and pointed, quite in the style of the *précieuses* of the time; in the original, the language is marked by an abundance of those conceits and flowery metaphors so characteristic of Spanish taste. — Dorante assures Clarice he has been in love with her for the past twelve months; relates in bombastic speech his military exploits, and his share in the victories of the French armies in Germany. — In the Spanish play, García passes himself off as an *Indiano* — a Peruvian nabob — boasts of his immense wealth, and begs leave to buy up then and there an entire jeweller's shop for her — an



offer which, to his considerable relief, is graciously declined. — In the *Menteur*, Cliton, who has meanwhile returned from his errand, amazed at the romancing of his master, repeatedly interrupts him, pulling him by the skirts of his coat ; and each time he does so, Dorante turns round and swears at him in a subdued voice. — *À parte* remarks being excluded from the French stage, this decidedly farcical by-play between master and servant is somewhat surprising ; the more so as it is absent from the original, and Corneille, in his *Examen*, speaking of this feature so familiar to the Spanish drama, takes pains to express his aversion to it. — All of a sudden, Alcippe, the intended husband of Clarice, with his friend Philiste — both fellow-students of Dorante at Poitiers — are seen by the girls to approach. In order not to arouse his suspicion, Clarice leaves hurriedly ; not, however, without some encouraging words to Dorante.

All the information Cliton succeeded in drawing from the coachman is, that the more beautiful of the two girls is called Lucrèce, that she is his mistress, that she resides in the Place Royale (la Vitoria, in the original), and finally that he does not know who the other girl is.

Now the susceptible Dorante has no doubt whatever but that the more beautiful is the girl he spoke to — the one he fell in love with. He is quite convinced it is *Lucrèce*. It could not be the other girl, he argues, for she had not even sense enough to put in a word or two in the conversation. In vain *Cliton* ventures to think her the more beautiful; silence being, to his mind, the finest quality in woman. But *Dorante* persists in his view. The fact is, that the girl he is smitten with is not *Lucrèce*, but her friend *Clarice*, the very girl chosen by his father to be his wife. — This mistake it is that causes all the intricate developments of the comedy, the whole trouble.

*Alcippe* (*Don Juan de Sosa*) now steps in, talking to his friend *Philiste* (*Don Felix*), in a rather animated fashion, about an entertainment which he supposes was given to *Clarice* by one of her adorers on the river the night previous, with supper, music, fireworks, and dancing. *Dorante* overhears the first few words, which contain the substance of the whole affair. Mutual recognition follows. Invited to continue his story, *Alcippe* yields but reluctantly, with considerable parsimony

of detail. Dorante then assumes a knowing smile, and proceeds to supplement these scant remarks, intimating that he knows all about it. Why, he says, it was he who gave the entertainment—a mere bagatelle; and adds that he has courted the lady in question for a whole month incognito at Paris. Cliton does not neglect to interrupt him, and indignantly pull his coat-tails. Dorante then disposes of a most vivid description of that fête, so full of glowing colors and realistic touches, that in the Spanish play, *Don Juan*, carried away by the force of his eloquence, declares, notwithstanding his jealousy, that he would rather miss the most brilliant carousal than that fine narrative.—In spite of Corneille's more elaborate and refined diction, this narration is hardly an improvement upon that of the original; it is at best but a very excellent paraphrase.—Persuaded of the faithlessness of Clarice, Alcippe departs furiously, determined to break with her.—Alone with his valet, Dorante explains matters: his love will appear greater to Clarice if she thinks it has lasted an entire year; he will stand better chances of success as a valiant soldier than as a learned law-stu-

dent; and lastly he will never allow himself to be hoodwinked by anybody's swaggering.

### *B. Second Act*

The second act in the *Menteur* shows, at its beginning, Géronte asking Clarice, who has just returned from her adventure with Dorante, for her hand in behalf of his son. This is done, in the original, in the presence of her guardian, Don Sancho, an old friend of Don Beltran's; in the *Menteur*, this personage, as also the father of Lucrèce, who appears in the last act of the *Verdad Sospechosa*, is omitted. — It is one of the rules of the classical theatre to reduce the number of characters of a play to those absolutely necessary, and it especially shrinks from introducing such as appear but once or twice, or only toward the end. The principle is to keep before the audience the same characters from the beginning to the close. A personage appearing only in the first scene of the last act, in the first edition of the *Menteur*, was left out in the subsequent editions. This omission of subsidiary characters considerably detracts from the completeness of

reality, and has otherwise its serious drawbacks. In the present case, for instance, the preservation of those characters would be much more in keeping with the proprieties, the *bienséances*, so strictly observed by classicists.

Fearing to arouse Alcippe's jealousy, Clarice does not wish to receive Dorante, and suggests that she would like to see him without his knowing it; Géronte consents to pass by her house with him and stop below the window.

Alone with Isabelle, her maid, Clarice confides to her that she rather likes the gallant stranger whose acquaintance she made that morning in the Tuileries, and that she is growing rather tired of Alcippe, who has been continually holding off the marriage for the last two years. In the original, Jacinta has also been kept waiting by her lover for quite a while; but she is nevertheless still attached to him, and declares she would feel unhappy were she to marry some one else. Clarice is much more practical. She is quite ready to leave Alcippe, but before giving him up she would make sure of Dorante — since Alcippe "*vaut toujours mieux que rien*," as she candidly explains. Isabelle advises that Lucrèce — who

has not to dread the jealousy of a lover—should write a note to Dorante, inviting him to appear that night in front of her house, at the Place Royale. To that end Isabelle is delegated to Lucrèce.

Alcippe now rushes in wildly, direct from his interview with Dorante; his suspicion is confirmed, having seen Géronte leave the house of his sweetheart. He vehemently charges Clarice with infidelity. She is not a little surprised when she makes the discovery that she passed the preceding night feasting with one Dorante; as yet she does not know that to be the name of her gallant admirer. In vain she protests she does not know him. At last, Alcippe, to make up, desires her to give him her hand and two kisses—the latter are an improvement upon the original. “Je n’ai pas le loisir, mon père va descendre,” she retorts. In the original, Jacinta leaves Don Juan with the words: “La mano? Sale mi tio.” In a short monologue Alcippe now gives vent to his rage, and then departs to send Dorante a challenge for a duel. Of all the scenes so far mentioned, the one containing this monologue is the sole not figuring in the *Verdad Sospechosa*.

As agreed, Géronte passes with Dorante and Cliton before the house of Clarice. He proposes to his son Clarice for a wife — that is, it will be remembered, the very girl Dorante has fallen in love with, but whose name he thinks is Lucrèce. To save himself from what he erroneously conceives to be a hateful marriage, he invents on the spur of the moment a most ingenious story. When a student at Poitiers namely, he was received one night by a noble young lady, Orphise by name. Unluckily, her father, Armédon, surprised them, leaving him barely time enough to hide behind the bed. Armédon was about to depart, and he already believed himself safe, when his watch started off striking the hour. Orphise explained to her father that it was a watch which a cousin had given her to have repaired. But at that juncture the pistol he was holding in his hand went off by accident. Orphise fainted, Armédon ran away shouting for help; he himself rushed out, fought the two brothers of the girl and the whole household, but his sword broke into three pieces, and he was ultimately obliged to retreat into the room. There, with the assistance of Orphise, who had meanwhile come to herself, he

barricaded the door, piling up against it tables, chairs, sofas, everything ; however, a wall was burst in, and he was surrounded by Armédon, his sons, and his servants, who threatened to take his life. Moved by the tears of Orphise, and still more by the sight of the swords of his assailants, he capitulated, and eventually married the girl. Orphise not being wealthy, though of noble birth, he had feared to inform his father of his marriage. — The good, credulous Géronte pardons his son, and hastens to break the unpleasant news to the father of Clarice, and to take back the word he had given.

This “trait de gentillesse” of Dorante is borrowed from the *Verdad Sospechosa*, with but few changes of detail ; the attending circumstances, however, differ. There, Don Beltran and García dismount their horses in the Park of Antocha, at the outskirts of Madrid. Don Beltran, whose information from the *letrado* concerning the vice of Dorante has meanwhile been corroborated by Tristan, severely lectures his son on his fatal habit. Now it is right after this reproof that García disposes of that famous marriage yarn — a contrast the effect of



which is destroyed in the *Menteur* by the postponement of the paternal reprimand to the last act. However, the old man not suspecting his son's vicious habit down to nearly the close of the *Menteur*, his continued blind credulity is rendered much more plausible.

Just before that scene in the Park of Antocha, we are in the room of Jacinta; she and Isabelle are looking out through the window, as agreed upon with Don Beltran. How astonished is she to see at Don Beltran's side the opulent *Perulero*; the gallant nabob from Peru, who vowed that he had been in love with her a whole year, is none else but the student García, fresh from the University of Salamanca the night previous — Don Beltran's own son. Despite his impudent lies, which love, aided by the cunning Isabelle, interprets in her favor, Jacinta decides to accept him. Instead of this amusing scene between the girls we see, in the *Menteur*, Clarice alone looking out from a window of her house, and from a window of her residence Lucrèce with Isabelle; they all merely watch Dorante as he talks to his father.

Informed by Isabelle of the wish of her mis-

tress, Lucrèce sends down with her maid Sabine the requested *billet doux* to Dorante who, upon seeing the name of Lucrèce on it, is of course confirmed in his initial blunder regarding the name of the girl he loves. So he sends Cliton into the house of Lucrèce to learn from the domestics something about her family and fortune.

No sooner has Cliton started on this errand, than a letter containing a challenge from Alcippe is handed to Dorante by a valet. In the Spanish play this note is delivered to García in his own room. He reads it aloud to himself, but Tristan, his valet, is not supposed to hear aught of it, and thus knows nothing of the challenge or the duel to follow it.

“Hier au soir je revins de Poitiers,  
D’aujourd’hui seulement je produis mon visage,  
Et j’ai déjà querelle, amour et mariage,”

Dorante says to himself, highly elated over his exploits, and sets out to meet Alcippe. Such are also García’s words : —

“Vine ayer, y en un momento  
Tengo amor y casamiento,  
Y causa de desafio.”

*C. Third Act*

In the first scene we see Dorante and Alcippe after the fight. Philiste has interposed and made peace. — In the original, the duel is actually witnessed. — Dorante appeases Alcippe's jealousy by a new lie : his sweetheart, he declares, is a married woman — a stranger in the city. With an air of bravado and defiance he then leaves for the rendezvous appointed by Lucrèce. — Philiste then informs Alcippe that Dorante only arrived at Paris the night before, and slept soundly in his bed ; and furthermore, that the rumor about the nightly entertainment given to Clarice was false, and all due to Alcippe's page mistaking two friends of Lucrèce's who left her house, for herself and Clarice. Alcippe then decides to reconcile himself to his fiancée ; but he quickly departs upon seeing her and Isabelle coming out from her house.

The two girls go over to the house of Lucrèce, bound for the projected meeting with Dorante. Clarice has already been acquainted by Géronte of Dorante's supposed marriage at Poitiers ; however, disappointed as she is, she

intends to speak to him, anxious to hear what he may possibly have to say about his love for her, and impatient, moreover, to confound the impostor with her wrath and just indignation. She and Lucrèce are then seen at the window of the latter's house. Isabelle is sent away to be on the lookout. Dorante and Cliton appear on the square. It is night. Now Clarice speaks to Dorante from the house, and under the name of Lucrèce. Her face is muffled up by the mantilla, which serves so well the purposes of the intrigues of the Spanish *comedia de capa y espada*. Dorante of course swears eternal love to her, and persisting in his error, calls her Lucrèce. At which the girls, ignorant to be sure of the mistake he is laboring under, suppose that he has suddenly transferred his affection from Clarice to Lucrèce. He denies that he is married, wherein surely he speaks the truth: they cannot, however, put faith in this denial, for they already are familiar with the extreme fertility of his imagination. He then explains that he invented the marriage story in order to escape the odious union with one Clarice. "But I was told that to-day you spoke to Clarice of your love to

her," Clarice bursts out. "To none other but to you did I speak, *Lucrèce*," protests Dorante, convinced of the veracity of his assertions. "Impostor! Impudence!" Clarice cries and quits the dumbfounded Dorante, who has for this once told the truth — but to no avail. His declaration, however, that he loves *Lucrèce* has its effect upon the girl who really bears that name, for, from the very start, she too has had a pronounced liking for the clever, gallant Dorante. Perhaps he says the truth after all, she reflects, in maintaining that he is not married. Thus, while the love of Clarice for Dorante is on the wane, that of her friend is growing.

Now this is a novel experience for Dorante. It is impossible for him to comprehend how it came about that while his romancing has invariably been given credence, now that he has spoken the sheer truth, no one would believe him. In a meditative mood he mutters, "*Je disais vérité*," whereupon Cliton replies: —

"Quand un menteur la dit,  
En passant par sa bouche elle perd son crédit."

García's surprise in the original is still greater, and Tristan's answer sharper and more

concise: "Estoy loco. Verdades valen tan poco. — En la boca mentirosa."

It is late in the night, and Dorante retires, hoping Clarice will be in better humor the next morning.

So far Corneille follows Alarcon pretty closely in the plot. No new scenes of any account are added, and most of the scenes of the original are imitated in detail; the same ideas, the same feelings, the same witticisms even being reproduced. Alarcon, however, prolongs the intrigue in a manner which Corneille was debarred from imitating both by the formal conditions of his art and the differences in the national customs. In the Spanish play namely, García is now to become once more the victim of his fatal self-deception. From Camino, Lucrecia's *escudero*, Tristan learns that she will go on a certain evening to pray in the chapel of the convent of Magdalena. This valuable piece of information, sold by Camino for hard cash, is delivered with the ready consent of his scheming mistress. There García meets the girls. Previous to this, he sent a note to Lucrecia promising to marry her. This letter she has just given, in the chapel, to Jacinta,

who is reading it aloud. García, having stepped up unnoticed, overhears part of it and recognizes his letter. Seeing it in the possession of Jacinta, he is most naturally again confirmed in his mistake as to her name. And so he at once gallantly accosts her, thinking she is Lucrecia. The girls now suppose him to have suddenly re-transferred his affection upon Jacinta, and instantly muffle up their faces in their mantillas. Now Jacinta wishes to prove to Lucrecia that she was mistaken in believing his protestations of love, and his promise of marriage. To this Lucrecia agrees, and whispers to her friend that she shall speak to García, but not let him know who she — Lucrecia — is. García makes love to Jacinta, speaks of their meeting at the Platerías, reminds her of the nightly rendezvous of three days before, and finally mentions his letter.

Nor does this imbroglio stop here. It becomes more intricate, and hence less plausible. García, namely, at last calls Jacinta "Lucrecia." One would now naturally expect that it was high time for the girls to guess finally that he knew Jacinta under a wrong name, and one would also expect that García himself would at

length see through his mistake. Instead, a most curious thing happens. Cunning Jacinta makes the following reflections: "To be sure he recognized Lucrecia, and, as he really loves her, he now, perceiving his error, is attempting to induce her to think that he has all the time been believing it was she he spoke to; that is why the shrewd García calls me now Lucrecia." The jealous Lucrecia on her side makes a reflection no less ingenious: "My perfidious friend Jacinta and tricky García are making love to each other right here before my very eyes. She has treacherously given away my name to him, and he calls her Lucrecia so that I may believe that he thinks he is speaking to me." The girls have, of course, not the slightest suspicion, let it be remembered, of García's mistaken notion. To them it must seem that he is courting Jacinta by day, and Lucrecia by night. As for García, he continues to labor under his fatal error. All three are bewildered — though not nearly as much as the spectator or the reader — and the whole affair is much more involved than before, and, it appears, beyond any reasonable expectation of its ever getting cleared up. — Evidently, the Spanish



poet, not content with the *qui pro quo* he had brought about some three days before, aided by the darkness of the night, was bent upon repeating the trick in the day ; but wisely chose for this the *chiaroscuro* of a convent chapel — a place to which the classic poet could, for more than one reason, not very conveniently accompany him.

Such a scene would hardly be possible in the broad daylight on a public square, and Corneille could not transfer the place of action at his pleasure. It could, moreover, not be carried out successfully without making ample use of *à parte* remarks, with which it is fairly bristling. The exigencies of the classical drama prevent the French poet from following the tortuous sinuosities of the Spanish intrigue.

#### *D. Fourth Act*

On the next day, early in the morning, Dorante and Cliton are waiting on the square for Sabine, whom they hope to induce by means of money to serve as go-between. Cliton tells his master that Alcippe had a duel, he does not know with whom. This is an excellent oppor-

tunity for Dorante to vent his imagination on his "unique secrétaire"; it was he, he says, that had the duel; and he adds that he killed Alcippe in the fight. Cliton is bewailing the sad lot of Alcippe, when the latter suddenly turns up. "Les gens que vous tuez se portent assez bien," whispers Cliton into his master's ear. Alcippe is on his way to bring Clarice the news of the long-expected arrival of his father, an event that at last renders their marriage possible. When he has left, Dorante explains to the still bewildered Cliton, that most probably he was revived by one of those wonderful remedies recently discovered. He himself, he asserts, possesses such a "poudre de sympathie." Cliton volunteers to serve him for nothing, if he will but let him have some of that mysterious powder. "One must pronounce a few Hebrew words while applying it," objects Dorante, "and you do not know any Hebrew." — "Vous savez donc l'hébreu." — "L'hébreu? parfaitement. J'ai dix langues, Cliton, à mon commandement." — "Vous avez tout le corps bien plein de vérités. Il n'en sort jamais une." The entire incident is taken from Alarcon, as also Cliton's witty sally: —

“Cuerpo de verdades lleno  
Con razon el tuyo llamas  
Pues ninguna sale dél.”

Some pretty traits of the original, however, Corneille failed to reproduce. Thus the pathetic “pobre Don Juan!” of the almost weeping Tristan, and the exceedingly comical “Cosa extrana!” with which García himself gives expression to his surprise at Don Juan’s resurrection. — Again, in the vivid account of his duel, García tells of a cure performed by such a wonderful charm. And to overcome his valet’s scepticism, he assures him that he himself saw it done: “Esto no me lo contaron; Yo mismo lo ví. — Eso basta. — De la verdad, por la vida, No quitaré una palabra.”

Géronte now arrives, saying: —

“Je vous cherchais, Dorante.

*Dorante.*

Je ne vous cherchais pas, moi. Que mal à propos  
Son abord importun vient troubler mon repos!  
Et qu’un père incommode un homme de mon âge.”

This is not the only remark behind the back of his father on the part of Dorante; such language is not to be found in Alarcon’s comedy, where García never exceeds the bounds of filial

respect. The good father desires Dorante to go to Poitiers, and bring his wife to Paris. Dorante pretends that she is with child, and could not venture on such a journey — continually making mocking remarks to his valet about his father's credulity. Then wishing to write to Dorante's father-in-law, G ron te asks for his name : he has forgotten it. But so has Dorante ; Pyrandre, he advances at haphazard. Was it not Arm don, inquires his father ? To be sure, Arm don ! Pyrandre is but another name of his, which he took from one of his estates — a reply that proves quite satisfactory to the all too easy G ron te. This scene is also borrowed from Alarcon.

The rest of the act presents but little interest. Sabine, the maid of Lucr ce, a figure substituted by Corneille for the *escudero* Camino, occupies here quite a prominent place. She engrosses our attention in the remaining four scenes, which are due to Corneille's invention. She first talks to Dorante, who gives her a letter for Lucr ce, and money for herself. She then has a conversation with Cliton, informing him that her mistress loves Dorante. After this Lucr ce tells Sabine to say that she — Lucr ce — tore

the letter without having read it. The same instruction is given by Lucrecia to Camino, who no more obeys this order than Sabine. Lucrèce permits Sabine to give, nevertheless, some hope to Dorante: she is to inform him in what places and at what hours her mistress is usually seen. Similarly, Camino is to tell Tristan, on his own authority, that Lucrecia will be in the convent on a certain evening: a precise statement, however, which leads to the imbroglio in the chapel above mentioned. The same indefiniteness, — a faint echoing, as it were, from the original, — due to the omissions rendered necessary by the limitations of the classic drama, is to be met with again in the next scene. Clarice there suggests to Lucrèce that it is about time to go to the “temple.” This word is the sole vestige of the picturesque chapel scene in the *Verdad Sospechosa*. Not only could Corneille not utilize that scene, the very word *église* was banished from the classic stage.

### *E. Fifth Act*

Géronte asks Philiste to inform him about Dorante's — mythical — father-in-law. Of course,

Philiste knows nothing about either Pyrandre or Armédon, nor has he ever heard of the beautiful Orphise, for that matter. In a sarcastic tone he tells Géronte that the marriage, even like the evening party on the river, is nothing but an offspring of his son's fertile fancy.

There now follows a short monologue of Géronte, suggested by the one of Don Beltran, but different in the details. In the vigorous expression of his sorrow and despair over his dishonor, Géronte somewhat reminds us of Don Diègue in the *Cid*.

Enter Dorante and Cliton. This is one of the most beautiful scenes of the comedy, and is entirely devoid of comical elements. In the original, there are two such severe reprimands on the part of the father. The one, in the first act, which, as is remembered, immediately precedes García's improvisation of his marriage story; the other, in the third act, the last in Alarcon's comedy. Out of these two scenes Corneille constructs his touching meeting between the outraged father and his unscrupulous son. Its tone is somewhat more violent than in the corresponding scenes of the original. But, in the main, the ideas are the same.

The very first words of G ron te addressed to Dorante, " tes-vous gentilhomme?" introduce the same discussion as to what constitutes a real nobleman—his blood or his deeds—as the "Sois caballero, Garc a?" of Don Beltran. But Don Beltran's recollection of the truthful Gabriel, his dead son, lends to the pathos of his outburst a more sad and tender strain.

Finally Dorante gives his father a reason why he forged that marriage story: being in love with Lucr ce he wished to escape the union with Clarice—he is of course still interchanging the two names. The indulgent G ron te then decides to give him a last trial; the father of Lucr ce being an old friend of his, he will at once go and ask him for her hand. But if what Dorante says again proves a lie, he swears he will kill him. With this menace G ron te indignantly departs. — Not a whit less earnest, but more temperate, and in a bitter, ironical tone, Don Beltran, in the Spanish play, doubting whether to believe or disbelieve his son's disavowal of his marriage, declares he will, before applying for the hand of Lucrecia, send for information to Salamanca. For,

says he, though he felt sure before, that his marriage was a mere invention, García now by his very confession has rendered him uncertain : —

“ Que ya temo que en decirme  
Que me engañaste, me engañas.  
Que aunque la verdad sabía  
Antes que à hablarte llegara,  
La has hecho ya sospechosa  
Tú con solo confesarla.”

Again the liar has told the truth — but again to no avail.

We are nearing the close. In both plays our young hero marries, not Clarice (Jacinta), the girl he first met and loved, but her friend Lucrece ; however, the manner this is brought about differs so considerably, that they may be said to have different solutions. García's marriage to Lucrecia is under compulsion. An inevitable outcome of the preceding events, it appears as a just punishment of the liar — rather lenient, of course, in its way. Dorante, on the other hand, marries Lucrece voluntarily. At the eleventh hour he suddenly changes his mind, and transfers his affection upon her. This unexpected change of front, Corneille attempts to prepare in the course of the conversa-



tion carried on by Dorante and Cliton after the furious G ron te has left to ask for the hand of Lucr ce. Dorante confesses to his valet his penchant for Lucr ce—whose name, of course, he yet thinks is Clarice. He must, however, he says, renounce this inclination, since his father has gone to get the other girl for him. Now Sabine appears with the information that her mistress loves him. Enter Clarice and Lucr ce. This meeting of the girls with Dorante was suggested to Corneille by the chapel scene of the original.

No sooner has Dorante caught sight of Clarice than he begins to court her—still thinking that her name is Lucr ce. The two girls are now at their wits' end, for only the night before, he declared that he detested her, and vowed that he adored the other. Finally Clarice calls her friend by name, saying, "Lucr ce,  coute un mot." Then only it is that Dorante discovers the mistake he has been laboring under all the time. Cliton, who has just found out the truth from the garrulous Sabine, whispers into his master's ear how he was mystified by the girls the previous night. Dorante now boldly maintains that he knew all about that intrigue,

that he never cared for Clarice, that his attentions to her in the Tuileries were mere gallantry, and that it was Lucrèce he has been in love with from the very start. The liar triumphs; and to convince her of the truth of his assertion, he has but to point to Géronte, who is just returning with the consent he has obtained from the father of Lucrèce. She accepts him, while Alcippe wins Clarice for his bride.

In the *Examen* of the *Menteur*, Corneille explains the change he operated in the treatment of the end of the play. A less forced marriage, he thought, would be more to the taste of the French public than the somewhat rough close of the original. — There, indeed, we see Don Sancho, the uncle of Jacinta (Clarice), visiting Lucrecia's father, Don Juan de Luna, an old nobleman. They are both in a room facing a garden, where the two girls are preparing supper. It is late in the evening. Don Juan de Sosa (Alcippe) arrives, and informs Don Sancho that he at last secured the charge he has so long been waiting for, and is thus in a position now to marry Jacinta. Don Sancho is happy to give him his niece, and passes in the garden to call her in. Enter Don Beltran, García, and

Tristan. Don Beltran takes his old friend Don Juan de Luna aside, and obtains from him the hand of Lucrecia for his son, while García most courteously congratulates Don Juan de la Sosa upon his new charge. Don Juan de Luna then steps over to García, and gives him his hand in token of agreement to the marriage proposed by Don Beltran. At that moment Don Sancho returns from the garden accompanied by the girls. Don Juan de Luna then whispers a few words to Lucrecia, after which Don Sancho calls upon the two lovers to approach each to his girl. The suspense of the spectators at that juncture may easily be fancied. García, anxious to prove to his father that he told the truth in asserting that his love for Lucrecia had compelled him to invent the story of the marriage, and desirous above all to retrieve in this way his honor, advances with a triumphant mien toward Jacinta, while Don Juan de la Sosa likewise goes up to her. In vain does García persist that she is the one he loves. His father threatens to kill him, and Don Juan de Luna is quite ready "to wash his dishonor with García's blood." García submits to force, as he himself says, and offers Lucrecia his hand.

Quite apart of the intrinsic superiority of this solution, the art and skill with which this last scene is conducted cannot but elicit our admiration. There is nothing strained or affected, the language is delightful in its naïveté and exquisite urbanity. The greatest effects are attained by the simplest of means. The scene of intimate family transactions and their intricacies is complete in its appropriate domestic setting, and with the presence of the father and guardian of the girls. By placing the last scenes in the street, and excluding from them the subsidiary personages, Corneille considerably weakens the theatrical illusion. Perhaps no other scene so well shows the almost insuperable difficulties encountered in adapting the free, untrammelled Spanish drama to the rigid rules of French classicism.

## 2. CHANGES UNDERGONE BY THE VERDAD SOSPECHOSA

It has not been attempted in this analysis to compare the *Menteur* with the *Verdad Sospechosa* textually. The plots and their construction, the characters and the actions,

have been mainly considered. It has been seen that Corneille's comedy is an imitation, and to some extent a translation, of the drama of Alarcon; that the first three acts closely follow the original; that in the last two, Corneille, forced to omit part of the intrigue, and furnish adequate substitutes, departs from his model; that the chief incidents of these two acts also are borrowed from Alarcon; and finally that in his solution, Corneille altogether abandons the original, inasmuch as he disregards the Spanish poet's prime intention, to wit, the inevitable punishment of mendacity by its own consequences—the leading idea of the *Verdad Sospechosa*. Evidently Corneille did not find the end sufficiently comical. A classic play had to be either tragical or comical throughout, and he was bent above all to preserve the unity of effect in his *Menteur*.

It has, moreover, been seen that, as in the *Cid*, Corneille adapts the Spanish play to French usages, and to the rules of the French theatre. With the first he has not much trouble. For the soldier just arriving from the battle-fields of Germany does, after all, as well as the opulent *Indiano* fresh from the gold mines

of Peru : the other changes made out of regard for the difference in the national manners are scarcely noticeable. — Nor has he any trouble, for that matter, with the unity of time : the three days or so of the *Verdad Sospechosa* are easily compressed into the thirty-six hours of the *Menteur*. — It is only when the unity of place is applied that the real difficulties turn up. By placing all the events in the Tuileries and the Place Royale, Corneille deprives us of a good many interesting scenes, as that of the Park of Antocha, where the duel takes place, the scene in the convent, and others. — Instead of our seeing the various phases of the action in their proper surroundings, so that we may catch a glimpse of the different *milieux*, instead of our being successively introduced, for instance, into the house of Don Beltran, of Don Sancho, of Don Juan, — the events are all brought down to us, on an open square, where the personages go hither and thither, apparently for no other reason than that the playwright will have them do so. The fact is, this square is no particular place at all ; it is anything you choose — *où vous voudrez*.

It is quite possible to accept without any

difficulty whatever the theory that all the events of a play may happen in one place, and that a public one. But it does not require a greater effort of our imagination to make the assumption that the action changes from one place to another—a practice both more convenient and more faithful to reality, for thereby we gain alike in theatrical verisimilitude and truth of detail; and characters need not be eliminated, nor events omitted or transposed. The very object of the unities, the greater verisimilitude, is defeated; because, as in the *Cid*, they are applied to events that in advance refuse to be comprised by them. This remark does not derogate from the value of a dramatic system that intelligently obeys those unities—but then the appropriate subject-matter must needs be selected.

Regarding the relation of the *Menteur* to the original, Corneille himself makes some statements which, however, do not quite tally with one another. In the *Épître* to the *Menteur*, he says: “En un mot, ce n’est ici qu’une copie d’un excellent original qu’il (Lope de Vega) a mis au jour sous le titre de la Verdad Sospechosa.” But he greatly underrates his in-

debtedness to the Spanish play when he says in his *Au lecteur*: “La plupart des incidents, bien qu’ils soient imités de l’original n’ont presque point de ressemblance avec lui pour les pensées ni pour les termes qui les expriment.” Neither this latter preface nor the *Épître* were incorporated in the definite edition of the poet’s works prepared by him in 1660, to which he added the *Examens* — critical discourses on his various plays. In the *Examen* of the *Menteur*, his final view is clearly and adequately set forth in but few words: “J’ai tâché de la réduire à notre usage et dans nos règles.” And when he says in the opening words: “Cette pièce est en partie traduite, en partie imitée de l’espagnol,” the whole truth is unequivocally expressed, and the opinion of even a casual reader of the two plays confirmed. One thing, however, belongs to the author, and that is the style. It is more finished, more polished than that of the original. Moreover, the alexandrine verse, elegant, stately, and refined, though not very compact, imparts to the *Menteur* a characteristic physiognomy: the play is, to use Corneille’s own phrase, “habillé à la française.”



## VII. LA SUITE DU MENTEUR

IN the *Épître* accompanying the earliest edition of the *Menteur*, Corneille declares that whether that play be judged to be stolen or borrowed from the Spanish, he has fared so well by it, that he does not expect it to be the last taken from them. And he kept his word. Immediately after the *Menteur*, in the same year — 1644 — the *Suite du Menteur* passed upon the boards, its success, however, as the author himself owns, not coming in any way near that of its predecessor. The *Suite du Menteur* is an imitation of Lope de Vega's *Amar sin saber á quién*, a comedy found by Corneille in the same volume of Spanish plays in which he had read the *Verdad Sospechosa*. All the dramas of that volume go under Lope de Vega's name, but *Amar sin saber á quién* really belongs to this poet. The following is a succinct account of the Spanish play.

Don Juan de Aguilar, a nobleman hailing from Sevilla, being on his arrival at Toledo falsely suspected of having killed one Don Pedro in a duel, is thrown into jail. Don Fernando, the rival in love and actual murderer of Don Pedro, has his sister Leonarda send Don Juan some money, under pretence of having fallen in love with him when she saw him led to prison past her house. Her maid, Inés, brings a love-letter and two hundred escudos to the prisoner, and on her next visit the portrait of her mistress. Don Fernando, being known as the rival of the killed man, is confronted with Don Juan for identification. But Don Juan, who knows him to be the guilty man, having by mere chance been a witness of the duel, feigns not to recognize him; and to divert all suspicion from him, even disposes of an entirely imaginary but very circumstantial description of the murderer. This generous action of Don Juan's, and the glowing account of his person given both by Don Fernando and Inés, work havoc upon the susceptible and sentimental Leonarda. It is now in real earnest that she falls in love with him. On the other hand, her kindness in

helping him, a mere stranger, her interest in him, and lastly her beauty as revealed by her picture, conquer the impressionable Don Juan. Thus, both grow to love each other "sin saber á quién" — without knowing whom. A visit of Leonarda to Don Juan in his prison strengthens their young affection. Upon this occasion she appoints a rendezvous to take place before her house that very night.

Leonarda, however, is courted by a friend of Don Juan's, Don Luis de Ribera, a highly connected nobleman. He bails Don Juan out of prison, thus enabling him to keep his appointment with Leonarda. At the rendezvous, before her balcony, Don Juan makes the unpleasant discovery that Don Luis is also in love with her. The following morning, Don Fernando brings Don Juan into his house to put up there during his stay in Toledo. Hearing of this, Don Luis begs Don Juan to win for him Leonarda's good will, and instructs him to ask for her hand. For the second time now Don Juan shows his generosity. Rather than injure his friend and benefactor in his prior rights, he sacrifices Leonarda, though he knows that she loves him, and leaves the city

abruptly. After his departure, Leonarda confesses to Don Luis her affection for Don Juan. Don Luis, indignant that his friend has dared outdo him in magnanimity, speedily sets off in his pursuit. He overtakes him in a road-inn on the way to Madrid, and still being his surety, takes him to Toledo saying he will put the fugitive back in prison. He brings him, however, to Leonarda. His marriage with her, Don Luis explains jestingly, is the prison which he has intended for Don Juan.

Lope de Vega's *Amar sin saber á quién*, it need hardly be said, has no connection whatsoever with Alarcon's *Verdad Sospechosa*. It is of course not a continuation of this play; moreover, it preceded it probably by a few years. There is besides not the slightest resemblance between these two plays. They are altogether of a different order. And above all, the character of the liar does not appear in *Amar sin saber á quién*.

Corneille, in imitating the plot of Lope de Vega's play, makes his comedy a sequel to his *Menteur*. To effect this, he changes Don Juan, the hero of the original, into Dorante, the well-known character from the *Menteur*; substitutes

the familiar Cliton for the *gracioso* Limon ; and calls Don Luis by the name of Philiste, Dorante's fellow-student at Poitiers. He leaves out a few subsidiary persons, as Lisena, for whom the duel was fought and who, at the end of the Spanish play, is married to Don Fernando ; as also the fellow-prisoners of Don Juan, the jail officials, and the alguazils. The less important incidents, as well as those that cannot be utilized owing to the application of the unity of place, are omitted : as the duel, the arrest of Don Juan and Limon, a conversation between Limon and some criminals in the prison, the scene between Don Luis and Don Juan at the road-inn. Other incidents are somewhat altered. Thus Mélisse (Leonarda) does not visit Dorante in jail twice, but only once, and then in the guise of a servant girl — her maid's sister. The confession of Mélisse of her love for Dorante is not made to Philiste in his presence alone, but in that of all the persons of the play. And it is immediately after hearing that avowal from Mélisse that Philiste cedes to her Dorante, who cannot very well — the rule of the unity of place does not allow — depart from Lyons, where the action of the French play is situated.

The main change, however, is the transformation of Don Juan into Dorante, who appears as the author of the generous deeds of the former. Apparently, Corneille desired to rehabilitate the reputation of his liar. He had, it seems, conceived something like a paternal affection for this offspring of his fancy. Already in the *Menteur* he had treated him most leniently by making him marry the woman he was in love with. His sympathy for the clever and ingenious Dorante appears indeed from his remarks about him. Thus, in his *Discours du poème dramatique*, he says: "Il est hors de doute que c'est une habitude vicieuse que de mentir; mais il débite ses mengeries avec une telle présence d'esprit et tant de vivacité que cette imperfection a bonne grâce en sa personne, et fait confesser aux spectateurs que le talent de mentir ainsi est un vice dont les sots ne sont point capables." In the *Épître* accompanying the *Suite du Menteur*, he speaks of Dorante's lies as "friponneries d'écolier." — It is evident that Corneille, wishing to follow up the success of the *Menteur*, conceived the idea of writing a sequel where its hero, who had met with such kind reception, would be shown cured of his vice.

There is one trait in *Amar sin saber á quién* which may have suggested to Corneille the idea of turning it into a continuation of the *Menteur*, and identifying the heroes of the two plays. That is the assertion of Don Juan that he does not know Don Fernando, and especially the vivid and detailed description he improvises of Don Pedro's murderer. Here, to Corneille's mind, is a falsehood not only justified by the end, but one which constitutes a noble deed. However that may be, the fact is, that in the *Suite du Menteur*, the author starts out to represent Dorante as still lying, but under the force of circumstances this time, and from purely generous motives. Yet Dorante is to some extent still attached to his old habit ; at times he lies quite gratuitously, or evinces too lively an appreciation of the falsehoods of his valet. — Cliton jestingly enumerates the various motives his master has assigned for each of the lies he has disposed of in the course of the day : —

“ Et vous savez mentir par générosité  
Par adresse d'amour, et par nécessité,  
Quelle conversion ! ”

And Dorante himself says : —

“ L'occasion convie, aide, engage, dispense ;  
Et pour servir un autre on ment sans qu'on y pense.”

One is somewhat surprised at the contrast between the Dorante of the *Menteur* and the Dorante of the *Suite du Menteur*; the former, selfish, disrespectful, mendacious; the latter, staid, generous, self-sacrificing. But one is amazed at the introduction the poet gives Dorante at the very opening of the *Suite du Menteur*. It appears that Dorante deserted Lucrèce the very day set for their wedding, making away with her dowry — and the moment after he has confessed to his valet his *folie*, as he is pleased to style the betrayal of Lucrèce and his theft, when Cliton inquires whether he is in jail for murder or larceny, he naïvely replies, “Suis-je fait en voleur?” It is not merely the old Dorante, the reckless liar of the *Menteur*, but the Dorante as here introduced, the rogue and thief, that suddenly develops into the noble hero of the *Suite*. Don Juan, in the original, presents no such incongruities of character, simply because he is not taken over bodily from another play, and commanded to change his nature for the occasion. He is the honest hero of an artistic drama, complete in itself, with neither predecessor nor *suite* — *Amar sin saber á quién*.



## VIII. HÉRACLIUS

FEW words will be necessary about this tragedy of Corneille. After the *Suite du Menteur* were produced *Rodogune* (1645), *Théodore* (1645), and in 1647 *Héraclius*. With *Héraclius* is connected a long, and at times rather animated, discussion over the origin of its main idea. It was in the *Mercure*, in 1724, that attention was first drawn to the similarity between *Héraclius* and Calderon's *En esta vida todo es verdad y todo mentira*. It was there maintained that the main idea, and some lines, were borrowed by Corneille from Calderon, two passages of *Héraclius* being brought in support of that claim, one of which, however, hardly offers any resemblance. In his *Commentaries* to Corneille, Voltaire makes the same assertion. His opinion was subjected to a searching examination, with the result that some French critics most

emphatically decided for Corneille's priority, and the Spanish, aided by a few German savants, just as emphatically declared Calderon to be the originator of the main idea of the play.

Nor are the facts of the case such as to allow of more than a probable conclusion. Marty-Laveaux and Viguier make the following point. Corneille's *Héraclius* was produced in 1647, while Calderon's play was first printed in 1664: the anterior date of *Héraclius* seeming thus to decide in favor of the French poet. To this the Spanish poet Harzenbusch, in his edition of Calderon, replies that the Spanish play in question must have been printed toward the year 1622. Neither this print nor any text supporting that date have, however, been produced by him or anybody else. Another contention of the French critics is, that Corneille always confessed with the greatest frankness the sources of his plays, and they point above all to his open declarations of his indebtedness to the Spanish in the *Cid*, the *Menteur*, and the *Suite du Menteur*, and later in his *Don Sanche d'Aragon*. What reason have we then to assume, say they, that Corneille could have concealed his debt in this one case,

and how can it, furthermore, be accounted for that he explicitly asserts his originality as far as *Héraclius* is concerned; for his *Examen* begins with these words: "Cette tragédie a encore plus d'effort d'invention que celle de Rodogune, et je puis dire que c'est un heureux original dont il s'est fait beaucoup de belles copies sitôt qu'il a paru."—But just these repeated loans of Corneille from the Spanish drama are invoked by the Spanish and German critics in favor of their claim. It is more probable, they say, that we have here another imitation by Corneille of a Spanish drama, than that "the giant Calderon"—who, according to one of his earliest panegyrists, imitated no one—condescended to rob "the dwarf Corneille," or, as a German critic calls him, the Gallic crow. Moreover, they add, Calderon knew no French. This was not absolutely necessary, retort the French critics, for Calderon might have heard of *Héraclius* upon the occasion of his visit to Paris in 1660—reported by the Jesuit Tournemine in his *Avertissement des Œuvres de Corneille*, 1738. But, it is rejoined, that visit of Calderon to Paris is not mentioned by anybody save that Jesuit father, and who

is it would take any stock in Jesuitic testimony?

Besides the date, which speaks for Corneille, Viguier considers the following fact as a decisive proof of the priority of *Héraclius*. Both in the preface and the *Examen*, Corneille indicates his historic source, and also shows in detail how he changed the historic data, and invented all of the intricacies of the play. To suppose this to have been but a trick on the part of Corneille intended to mislead the reader into the belief that he had drawn directly from the sources would, says Viguier, be attributing to Corneille "the profound perversity of an impudent plagiarist." — However, this is no absolutely conclusive proof either: did not Corneille turn to the historian Mariana and the old Spanish ballads only after he had read Guillem de Castro? — Again, the Spanish critics allege that Calderon was much more likely to get the idea of his play from *La Rueda de la Fortuna* (1616) of Mira de Mescua, a contemporary of Lope de Vega, than from Corneille's *Héraclius*; and our German critic gently insinuates that Corneille not only robbed Calderon, but probably also pilfered the riches of *La Rueda de la Fortuna*.

The opinion regarding the ownership of intellectual products was, of course, in those days different from what it is to-day. The right of individual property did not then extend to the realm of thought. Ideas stored up in literary works were not only the common property of all who could read or go to the playhouse, but likewise of those who felt inclined to try their hand at giving them shape and life as it best suited their own taste. Just as those of Italy, so the literary productions of Spain were utilized considerably by many of the English dramatists, before, during, and after Shakespeare's activity. In Spain itself, there is perhaps not one dramatic author who is not more or less indebted to his great predecessors for some of his ideas or even entire plots. Lope de Vega's works especially were the rich storehouse from which all the later poets drew to the best of their ability. From him Mira de Mescua and Guillem de Castro obtained the plots of some of their best comedies. After Mira de Mescua, again, it was that poets like Guillem de Castro, Tirso de Molina, Alarcon, and Calderon imitated many a play. The subjects treated by the Spanish dramatists came in time to be regarded

as common property of the poets, much as were, among the Greeks, the myths of their national life ; the younger dramatists constantly turned back to their great forerunners. The same views obtained among the French dramatists ; they took their ideas and subjects wherever they could get them. German critics, and especially von Schack, summarily imputed to them plagiarism as regards their southern neighbors. Von Schack, however, later frankly avowed his mistake and recognized the originality of the French poets even when the subjects treated by them were not their own.<sup>1</sup>—In conclusion it may be said, that even if it be shown that Calderon's play suggested that of Corneille, that would not diminish the right of ownership of the latter. For as far as plot, construction, and incidents are concerned, there is absolutely no resemblance between *Héraclius* and *En esta vida todo es verdad y todo mentira*.

<sup>1</sup> See his introduction to a translation of selected plays by Calderon in the Cotta'sche Bibliothek.

## IX. DON SANCHE D'ARAGON

THIS *comédie héroïque*, separated from *Héraclius* only by *Andromède* (1650), appeared on the stage in 1650. Here we have another point of contact of Corneille with the Spanish drama, which is, however, of very slight significance. According to Corneille himself, this play did not meet with any lasting success; indeed, it dropped out of the répertoire of the theatres in Paris after the first few representations, and was resumed for a while only toward the middle of the eighteenth century. It is noticeable as an attempt at what is commonly called to-day the *drama*, that is, a play with a serious subject, but no tragical conclusion. In his *Épître*, Corneille even suggests that instead of princes, as the main characters of tragedies, there might be used, and to better purpose too, men and women of our own station of life—a bold opinion for the time, and one the poet did not dare put into practice.

The central figure of this play is Don Sanche, son of the King of Aragon ; but, brought up by a poor fisherman, he believes that he is his son. Through his valorous deeds in the wars against the Moors, he wins the esteem of the king of Castile, and the heart — and finally the hand — of his sister, later queen of Castile. “ Le sujet n’a pas grand artifice. C’est un inconnu, assez honnête homme pour se faire aimer de deux reines. L’inégalité des conditions met un obstacle au bien qu’elles lui veulent durant quatre actes et demi ; et quand il faut de nécessité finir la pièce, un bonhomme semble tomber des nues pour faire développer le secret de sa naissance, qui le rend mari de l’une, en le faisant reconnaître pour frère de l’autre.” Such are, in Corneille’s own words, the contents of the play.

Only part of the first act is imitated from the Spanish. It is Corneille himself who informs us of this in his *Examen* : “ Ce qu’a de fastueux le premier acte est tiré d’une comédie espagnole intitulée el palacio confuso.” He does not, however, indicate the name of the Spanish author. La Huerta, in his *Catalogo alphabetico de las comedias* (Madrid, 1785), mentions two



dramas of that name, one by Mira de Mescua, the other by Lope de Vega: he adds, however, he succeeded in seeing only the latter. Von Schack holds there is but one such drama, and that belongs to Mira de Mescua. But neither he nor any other of the historians of the Spanish drama give an account of any such play. It could not be found in any of the libraries of Paris. As it is, taking Corneille's word for it, the imitation would amount to but one scene of the first act, that in which occurs the clash between Don Sanche and the Spanish grandees. Thus, even if *El Palacio Confuso* were within reach, very little could be gained toward the further elucidation of Corneille's relation to the Spanish drama.

In *Don Sanche d'Aragon*, Corneille is for the last time seen in touch with the Spanish drama; with a result, however, vastly inferior to that obtained through the *Cid* — his first inspiration drawn from Spain, fourteen years before.



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